

HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

天下無事

AT ASIA TRIENNIAL MANCHESTER 2014

CENTRE FOR CHINESE CONTEMPORARY ART

EDITED BY JIANG JIEHONG





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CFCCA
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CONTEMPORARY ART





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PREFACE

At the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art we have a proud 28-year history of showing Chinese artists' work. Naturally, in recent years, we have asked ourselves, 'What does it mean to show Chinese artists' work in this, the Chinese Century?' In asking this question, we do not situate ourselves within the flourishing industry that predicts global futures. Rather, we recognise that while futurologists champion broad trends, artists do something far more intimate: they provide us with experiences, with opportunities to interrogate or glimpse the very complexity in which we live; the same complexity in which shifting international dynamics are actually happening.

It is fitting, then, that 'Harmonious Society' is not a survey exhibition. It does not endeavour to present 'new trends' in Chinese contemporary art, nor does it espouse some shared version of a Chinese 'world view'. What it does is something much more nuanced: it asks audiences, at this particular moment in time, to pause and think about our rapidly changing global society. Works by over thirty exceptional Chinese artists provide a multiplicity of perspectives – global, historical, personal, absurd and often contradictory: perspectives that should open debate on how we shape our future.

To facilitate the ambitious works presented here, the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art has drawn upon national and international partnerships, inspired individuals and, most crucially, the 'can do' attitude of Manchester's institutions – the National Football Museum, Manchester Cathedral, the ArtWork, The John Rylands Library, and the Museum of Science and Industry. Heartfelt thanks to Tang Contemporary, Taiwan's Ministry of Culture, the University of Salford, Arts Council England, Manchester City Council, Salford City Council, Cathay Pacific and our partners at Asia Triennial Manchester. Without support from the T-Museum, collectors, and numerous artists' galleries and universities in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, many artists or their works would not be in the exhibition. Without the support of Birmingham City University we would not have our exceptional Lead Curator, Jiang Jiehong. Thanks and appreciation is due to our creative team, led by Jiang Jiehong, which includes Ying Tan, Ying Kwok, Lindsay Taylor, Paul Stanley, Yu-ling Chou, Huang Mei and Luo Yi, with valued input from John O'Shea, Jacqui Fortnum, Evette Jeal, Dymphna Gould and Deborah Kell.

There are too many staff members, interns and volunteers to thank everyone involved individually, though special mention must be given to Hannah Hartley, Daniel Jarvis, Fraser Chapman, Denise Cheung, Charlie Booth, Alistair Small, Alma Budd, Serein Liu, Wang Zhaoyi, Catharine Braithwaite, Sarah Gormley, Sean McGrath and Simon Chislett for their invaluable contributions.

Most importantly, I thank the artists for their considered and inspired work.

Sarah Fisher



INTRODUCTION

JIANG JIEHONG

Since the open door policy introduced at the end of the 1970s, China has welcomed the world. Over the past three decades, the country has experienced unprecedented political reform, economic growth and rapid urbanisation, turning it into the second largest economy in the international arena. This upheaval, together with all its consequences, has leached into daily life, while many social problems and challenges have ensued within and beyond the country, including China's Cross-Strait relationship with Taiwan and, most recently, the 'Umbrella Movement' in Hong Kong.

China, however, has a vision for itself. 'Harmonious Society' (*hexie shehui*) is a concept that was first proposed by the Chinese government during the National People's Congress of 2005. The idea switched China's focus from economic growth to overall societal balance and harmony, and has become clearly visible in banners all over the country. The phrase was coined as an attempt to resolve or dilute the problem of social inequality and injustice, or, officially, more positively, 'to build China into a prosperous, powerful, democratic, civilised and harmonious modern country ... continually making new contributions to human progress with China's own development', and to some extent, together with every other country, 'to build a harmonious world of sustained peace and common prosperity'.¹

Responding to the overall theme of the third Asia Triennial Manchester, 'Conflict and Compassion', this socio-economic vision in contemporary China provides an immediate answer, which seemingly presents no 'conflict' or 'disorder' (*luan*) but rather, most poetically, a kind of 'harmony', leading to long-term stability. In this project, it is apparent that the English title - 'Harmonious Society' - derives from the political proposition that China's regime advanced in 2005, while its Chinese re-interpretation - '*tianxia wushi*' (literally, nothing happened under heaven) - extends the philosophical connotations rooted in Chinese culture to encompass a global social imagination. This is an accessible platform for us all - artists, curators and audiences. Through a variety of perspectives, we can reflect the 'harmony' of China, Greater China, Asia and the whole world (*tianxia*, under heaven), to generate not just critical, but more importantly, creative thinking, and new understandings of our time.

Tianxia, essentially, is not a geographical term, but, according to Chinese culture, a concept developed for the metaphysical realm of mortals, associated with political sovereignty, and located at the centre of the mandated land, the 'kingdom' and the entire world. On 1 October 1949, Mao Zedong, together with his Communist comrades, ascended Tiananmen, the Gate of Heavenly Peace, which once stood as a central gate of the palace of the Qing Dynasty, to proclaim the foundation of the People's Republic. That particular moment surely added a new political dimension to the former imperial



architecture, and reinterpreted the notion of a hidden ruling power from heaven to symbolise the beginning of a new era. When the Forbidden City, one of the very few surviving historical relics in China, became a tourist site marked by a ticket office, its original gate, Tiananmen, lost its architectural function. No longer the entrance to the old, it became the backdrop to the new. It seemed to have been detached from the former architectural complex and transformed into a monument right on the axis of the city, followed by the Monument to the People's Heroes and Mao's Mausoleum, re-forming the Square, the centre of the city and the centre of *tianxia*. It has now become the joint between the past and the present, the dead and the alive; the centre of the centre. Tourists travel from all over the country to the capital city and, for many, one of their tasks is to be photographed in front of the Tiananmen building. During the process of China's rapid urbanisation, this building lost its singularity. There are now many mock-ups – usually miniaturised copies – outside Beijing. These are built by regional governments largely for political purposes. As a result, conveniently, they come to their audience instead, and become part of their local life, part of their family photo albums, and part of their cultural and nationalistic imaginations. To put it another way, the new Tiananmens are not necessarily connected with either a sense of imperial dignity or of post-1949 revolutionary significance at all, but rather, have become mere exotic attractions functioning as theatrical sets.

Yang Zhenzhong's work can be taken as a starting point to illustrate the notion of 'harmony'. In his installation, the artist deconstructs the architectural body into nine separate parts, apparently scattering them in a disorderly manner (see p. 166). Walking around and between the pieces, the viewer might only perceive the portrait of Mao, the national emblem of China and two printed slogans as fragmentally reminiscent of the most familiar image in the country – the Tiananmen. But what has happened to the 'divine' building? Only when the viewer finds the specially designated perspective can this complex mass, marked with recognisable signs, be 'reassembled' into a whole image, and only then do the slogans appear comprehensible: 'Long live the People's Republic of China; long live the great unity of the people of the world.'

Similarly, at first glance, Zhang Peili's work *Elegant Semicircles* looks 'political' or 'nationalistic' (see p. 56). The installation features a series of six flags in solid yellow, black, red, white, green and blue. All these colours are the most popular for national flags across the world, but without being used in any combinations they look unrecognisable. They represent no nations, but all nations. Each flagpole, over 3 metres in length, reaches out from the wall in a determined salute and moves up and down in perfect unison with the others. At the same time, the flags turn slowly 180 degrees, rising and falling, sweeping the floor of the space gracefully and collecting the dirt from the concrete. The motor mechanism animates the flagpoles in complete silence. The significance of their synchronised movement remains unknown: whether celebrating a triumph, or surrendering, or signifying a harmonised reality. It is easy to conclude that one day, even when the fabric of the flags has worn away, the mechanical gesture

of the installation will carry on, for ever, in its gentle manner. This is where the tainted meets the pure; and this is how the spiritual blesses, and sacrifices, itself for the worldly.

'Harmonious Society' is not necessarily only about China (with or without political implications). It can be more universal, about *tianxia*. It is about the wisdom to make the balance. Wang Sishun's minimalist installation, with the same name as the exhibition, shows a simple metal cylinder, over 2 metres tall and more than 270 kilograms in weight (see p. 40). Like a magician, the artist tilts and balances this giant object at a certain angle, almost impossibly, as if defying the laws of gravity. Although the pillar seems perfectly still and stable, without any visible sway, its size and weight are physically daunting, even with the barrier in place to keep viewers at a distance. Reportedly weighted and stabilised by lead on the interior, the piece has a mechanism that makes it function almost as a huge acrobatic tumbler. But no one would want to try to disturb the balance and see if the cylinder can move back to the same position. Let it stay unfallen, stay calm, stay in harmony. It is certainly unwise – as we know, almost immoral – to expose the trick of a magician.

Chen Ching-yuan's animation piece *Flare-s* depicts simply a vast seascape in deadly quiet darkness, with no geographical signs or human traces. Only the sound of the waves unfolds the narrative. One man, or a group of 'one man', sails alone on a boat, one following the other, moving into the scene and sending rescue signals into the sky. In the desolate 'there', no means of present-day communication seem to be functional: the flares become the only way to contact the rest of the world. However, the men in danger do not seem to be desperate. As more and more signals are ignited, like fireworks, the urgency of the situation is transformed into a kind of celebratory event. For the artist, *tianxia wushi* is 'a beautiful misunderstanding; it may have been seen as splendid and romantic pictures, which are actually formed by a series of very final calls crying out for help before foreseen disasters'.²

The challenge as well as the excitement of this curatorial project was not only to discuss and respond to the notion of 'harmonious society', but also to engage with a variety of physical spaces, both institutional and non-institutional, including a warehouse, a library and a cathedral, together with their respective historical, cultural and religious connotations. In addition to the gallery space of the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art, the five additional venues were selected not merely as 'extra' or 'alternative' spaces, but to encourage artworks to depart from 'the museum' as a designated 'safety zone', and to enter into and interfere with the notion of the conventional public sphere for art. More importantly, their inclusion questions and re-defines the 'display of art', and interrogates the distance between art and life. These non-institutional spaces naturally bring many restraints. They are not 'white cubes', static, ready for the expected viewing of an art piece. Instead, they continue to function in their own ways – business as usual – serving the needs of thousands of people daily. When art comes face to face with them, it must find within itself an even



more potent creative force to confront the new challenges and to reassess its own role in the dynamics of everyday life.

Perhaps one of the most visible works in the project is the outdoor installation *Solar, Manchester* by LuxuryLogico, located at Manchester Liverpool Road, originally the world's oldest inter-city passenger railway station, which opened to the public on 15 September 1830 and is now part of the Museum of Science and Industry (see p. 136). In collaboration with local councils, various artists collected nearly two hundred recycled street lamps and converted and reassembled them into an electronic installation that manipulates the patterns of spatial lighting as an artificial radiating sun. The discarded objects are thus transformed into an idealistic narrative, and at the same time the past, particularly at dusk, is illuminated, with all the urban memories once lit and collected by the street lamps being retold to the present and future.

ArtWork, an artist-led warehouse space, 'stores' a series of large wooden blocks by Jin Feng, each more than 3 metres tall (see p. 26). These *Chinese Plates* present direct citations from the Constitution of the People's Republic of China: 31 articles in total relating to the rights of 'the people', for example, 'the citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration' (article 35) and 'freedom of religious belief' (article 36). The blocks are made in the form of slim vertical signboards normally used for *danwei* (work units), a Socialist term applicable to state-owned enterprises, including government offices, courts, presses and schools. Each Chinese character, whether big or small, has been meticulously hand-carved in the identifiable font for official signboards, demonstrating the power of authority. But the characters are all inverted, turning themselves into traditional woodcut plates ready for printing. The wooden panels are original altar table-tops, collected from individual traditional households. Rather than displaying offerings to gods and ancestors, according to customary belief, they have been re-crafted to exhibit the laws, or indeed the beliefs, of the 'harmonious society'. And yet, because of their reversal, the words are not immediately legible and can be seen merely as attractive objects with a particular visual quality: in the artist's words, a kind of 'political aesthetics'. Without being printed off the plates to become fully meaningful, the engraved literature can stay ornamental, or rather, in the context of the venue, can stay in storage, for a harmonised life carrying on outside and for people to live in peace with each other.

Also in the warehouse space of ArtWork, Yuan Gong reconstructs a deconstructed site with a huge installation work, *Losing Control*, based on his personal experience of the forcible demolition of his studio by the Shanghai government (see p. 52). The installation features scaffolding materials that can be found all over China as it undergoes urban transformation. On closer inspection, the artist has re-shaped his metal objects into ancient weapons such as spears, swords and halberds, on watchful stand-by, ready for the next conflict. The performance piece *Turbulence*, originally planned as an extension

of *Losing Control*, turned out to be exceptional in its own right and was staged as a site-specific work at Manchester Cathedral (see p. 110). Four performers – two women and two men, all dressed in black – began by moving in very slow motion, almost imperceptibly to the surrounding audience. Each held a tube – the only props – to connect, extend and punctuate their body language. The movement sped up little by little, and eventually concluded in a radical scene of bodily contact, with the participants rising, falling, wrestling and collapsing. The black and white tubes were in fact scrolls of slogans that the artist and his team used to protest against the demolition, rolled up with the content unseen, as the batons of the performance. One of the female artists finally became the centre of attention. She seemed to have given up control of her body completely and left it to the tender mercy of the others, allowing her arms, legs, neck and waist to be folded, dragged, stretched and rearranged again and again in any position. She was helpless, voiceless, but committed to facing any situation with her fragile yet tenacious body.

To respond to the 1890s neo-Gothic architecture of The John Rylands Library, Wang Yuyang 'occupied' a table in the middle of the Historic Reading Room with a large pile of books. This site-specific installation is in fact made with silicon replicas of the library's Chinese book collection, a laptop computer, and an original table and chairs from the room, as hyper-realistic sculptures (see p. 94). The books on China are mainly 19th- and early 20th-century publications in different designs, with hard and soft cover bindings. Almost undetectable, even on careful inspection, all the visual presentations of the 'books' and 'furniture' have been hand-painted by the artist himself, including every single letter, pattern, illustration, even photographic image, as well as the textures of the materials. As soon as one gets near to this interactive work, each book starts to 'breathe', inhaling and exhaling, subtly and yet astonishingly. While the other readers in the library continue their browsing, the books of China wait, quietly, for a reader ... as if everything carries on as normal, 'nothing happened', unless the 'revival' of the 'books' is discovered.

If one respects the environment and its user, it is almost a paradox to produce a sound piece in a working library. Samson Young proposed – with a live performance piece – something musical, yet muted (see p. 88). *Muted Situations*, as the artist states, 'are situations that are usually expected to generate a large amount of sound or noise, but are carried out with the most consciously sound-producing part of the action intentionally silenced. All of the movements that are normally required in the given situation are carried out with no diminution of energy, seriousness or performative intent, except that the performers must try their best to suppress the "consciously sound-producing component" of the action'.³ In the foyer space of The John Rylands Library, a choir of eight members led by a conductor performed, complete with full facial expressions, but their voices were deliberately suppressed. The aural did not match the visual. Audience could only discern some very small noises inevitably produced through the choir's bodily movement, for example, the



sounds of their breath and those made by their lips, tongues and teeth and their joints. While the musicians improvised an exciting variety of harmonies (visually), the melody remained unheard.

To many people in China, one of the keywords to describe Manchester is 'football'. It seems to be the cultural ambassador that introduces the city to the world. TOF's *Rehearsal* was proposed especially for the National Football Museum (see p. 36).⁴ For the TOF Group, 'the work is an interpretation from the perspective of a Chinese (foreign) artist; and it is not necessarily a "correct" interpretation'.⁵ In this 3D animation piece, TOF invite us to visit Old Trafford stadium, the home of Manchester United Football Club. As public spheres, all football fields have a similar spatial structure, which allows the notion of a universal spectatorship of the game. But what will be watched here is not a football match. Instead of players and teams, rows of police appear unexpectedly on the pitch. They are all dressed in black riot gear, which protects both their bodies and their personal identities. Starting with their feet, they begin to move in unison, expressionlessly and intimidatingly, presenting one same face, or no face. The viewer receives the impression that nothing can hold them back. Along with the cheerful pop music in the background, however, their manoeuvres soon evolve and the atmosphere becomes triumphant. Their martial movements for defending and attacking, together with their truncheons and shields, seem to become part of a dance formation. The ceremonial aspect of the event is further compounded by delightful cheerleaders with brightly coloured outfits, pompoms and impersonated enjoyment, highlighted against the monochromatic and geometric form of the riot police. The imagery might well remind us of the group exercises and mass parades that were organised to celebrate political and festive occasions at national and regional levels in China. With numerous practices and rehearsals, parades consisted of hundreds of thousands of people presented as a simple matrix, in straight rows and columns. Participants were encouraged to line up and make movements that were precisely simultaneous. Using digital technology, the artists' interpretation here can easily eliminate any discrepancies of bodies and their movement to present a perfect performance by both the riot police and the cheerleaders, strictly 'trained' according to positions, paces and spirits in conformation. They are one single body. As the title indicates, this is only the 'rehearsal', an 'unreal' moment; a moment to be performed in anticipation of the 'real'. Before the time for the 'real' arrives, no matter whether it will be a victory or a failure, a festivity or a tribulation, we can enjoy the current moments of 'harmony'.

This is 'Harmonious Society', a genuine one, formed by the different venues beyond the walls of the art museum; and it is quite possibly an apolitical one for many artists, who have reflected on the subject with a variety of creative strategies, personal reflections and, sometimes, a sense of humour.

¹ 'China's peaceful development road', *People's Daily*, 22 December 2005.

² Chen Ching-yuan, email to the author, December 2013.

³ Samson Young, artist statement, 2014.

⁴ The work was not accepted by the authority of the National Football Museum, but was eventually shown at the ArtWork instead.

⁵ Jin Feng (TOF), artist statement, 2014.





ARTWORK

CHEN CHING-YUAN

HE AN

JIN FENG

LEUNG CHI WO

TOF GROUP

WANG SISHUN

WANG YIN

XU QU

YAN BING

YUAN GONG

ZHANG PEILI

ZHOU XIAOHU

ZHUANG HUI





CHEN CHING-YUAN

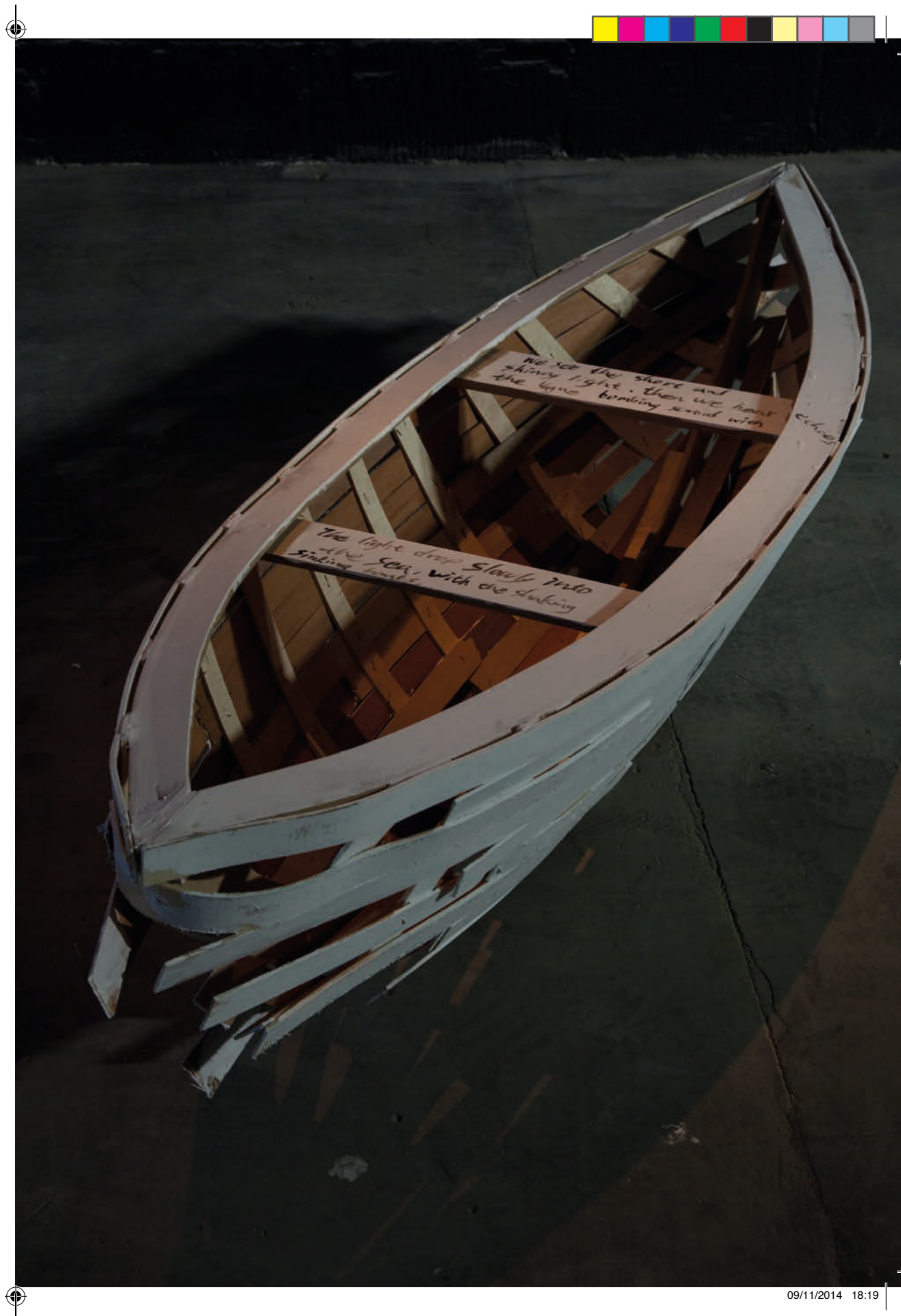
Flare-s, 2013

Chen Ching-yuan's *Flare-s* is an installation made up of a looped five-minute animation and three worn lifeboats that are illuminated at intervals by spotlight. In a dark curtained room, the animation is projected onto a wall. It shows a night sea, where waves constantly sound and wooden boats drift. There are men on the boats, who send rescue signals into the night sky. Yet no rescue is received. More and more signals are ignited: symbols of crisis and desperation that paradoxically seem to become celebratory fireworks as the boats sink.

Flares are widely recognised as a maritime distress signal that serves as a method of communication. They are attention-seeking both for the purposes of being eye-catching as well as for the possibility of taking action in an extreme, isolated and insecure situation. This distress signal is used by Chen Ching-yuan to parallel scenes of spectacle, such as fireworks displays, which are mainly meant to be (passively) viewed. While the distress signal transforms into celebratory spectacle, the misunderstanding silently drowns the sailors. The failure of communication and the isolation of the men enigmatically mirror the geo-political situation of Taiwan, and the artist reflects on his surroundings when he says: 'Every individual on the boats is trying hard to communicate with the outside world by sending out a distress signal. But outsiders might see the signals as ravishing celebration and have no idea what is going on.'

Paradoxically, in *Flare-s*, viewers are both passive spectators and isolated drowned men, for we project our own identification onto the sailors, as we helplessly watch their boats sink. Chen Ching-yuan often uses visual metaphor to articulate the ambiguity and perplexity of national politics and internal reflections of identity. *Flare-s* demonstrates his distinctive way of storytelling, which constantly negotiates with the outside world.

Yu-ling Chou







HE AN

It Is Forever Not, 2014

He An is among the generation of artists who have grown up as China has opened itself to the world. Since the country adopted its open door policy, the influx of a vast amount of Western culture has had a massive impact. He An grew up in the midst of a phase of enormous industrial and urban expansion, witnessing the impact of economic growth on prosperity, information overload from various media, and changes in socio-political circumstances. His works deal largely with the physical and psychological atmosphere of China's growing cities.

He started to incorporate neon signs in his works in 2000, and has employed them to construct words that speak of loneliness, sex and death. For the artist, neon signs connote more than simply signage of shops or advertisements. He considers them to be the symbols of modern development, bearing the history and story of contemporary Chinese society. They shine at night, but at the same time they reflect a sense of detachment from modern city life.

It Is Forever Not is a neon light sculpture made up of Chinese characters from stolen advertising signs. Some viewers might take the title as a direct response to the exhibition theme of 'Harmonious Society'. On the contrary, it should not be seen as a confirmation or statement, but rather as a contradiction that contains both doubt and desire. What the artist is trying to suggest is uncertainty – a distinct state arising from a broad history of denial, which in turn is born of the emotional backdrop to his life in China: the transient quality of the fast-changing society and the anxiety this brings.

Ying Kwok





JIN FENG

Chinese Plates, 2014

Jin Feng works with a variety of media. He has always shown an interest in the law and constitution of modern China and their impact on ordinary people. For this exhibition, he has made an installation of large wooden blocks, featuring texts from China's constitution of human rights. Constitutions are drawn up to protect our rights in society, but how well do we understand them and how much do we pay attention to them?

The heavy wooden panels take the format of traditional government signs in China, with texts carved like printing blocks, adopting the form of classic stamps or seals. Time-honoured forms of carving and printing are subverted in ways that invite multiple interpretations. The texts are carved in reverse, on a total of thirty-one wooden blocks that are stacked in a group, juxtaposing and overlapping one and other, making them extremely difficult to interpret, even for a Chinese reader. However, it was never the artist's intention to draw any attention to the content of the constitution, and it is not important what each panel says. A sense of alienation arises from the solemnity of the wall of constitution, which precisely reflects the detachedness of both the establishment and constitution nowadays in modern China, in relation to the lives of ordinary people.

Ying Kwok







LEUNG CHI WO

Untitled (Love for Sale), 2014

Leung Chi Wo is a multidisciplinary artist who regularly employs different media for his work, which broaches the realms of human connection, historical context, sensory perception and cultural identity. In response to the 'Harmonious Society' exhibition in Manchester, the artist carried out extensive research on the city, which revealed a series of news events reported in 1996. By skilfully synthesising these fragments of seemingly unrelated incidents together, Leung Chi Wo has created something that is evocative of individual paths crossing through space and time, prompting the viewer's curiosity and imagination.

The installation consists of two parts: a light-box photograph showing Manchester's Free Trade Hall with illuminated letters saying 'No politics today', next to a framed copy of an old newspaper with the IRA bombing of Manchester as headlines and a small article reporting the death of jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald on the front page; and a tall column of newspapers stacked floor to ceiling. These components are linked by a complicated, concealed mechanical device, connected to a button beneath the light-box photograph located on the other side of the gallery. No instructions are given, so the visitor might press the button only to discover that their little gesture has caused a huge disaster, bringing down the 3-metre-high newspaper column with a loud bang and disturbing the peace in the exhibition space. By the time the visitor has made their way to the space and realised what has happened, they will hear Ella Fitzgerald softly singing 'Love for Sale', and they will see the fallen column being slowly pulled up, reverting back to its original state.

For Leung Chi Wo there are stories behind each of these artefacts and they are all connected one way or another. The playful cause-and-effect destruction and reincarnation of the piece provide the visitor with a visceral experience of seemingly unconnected strings of events.

Ying Kwok









TOF GROUP

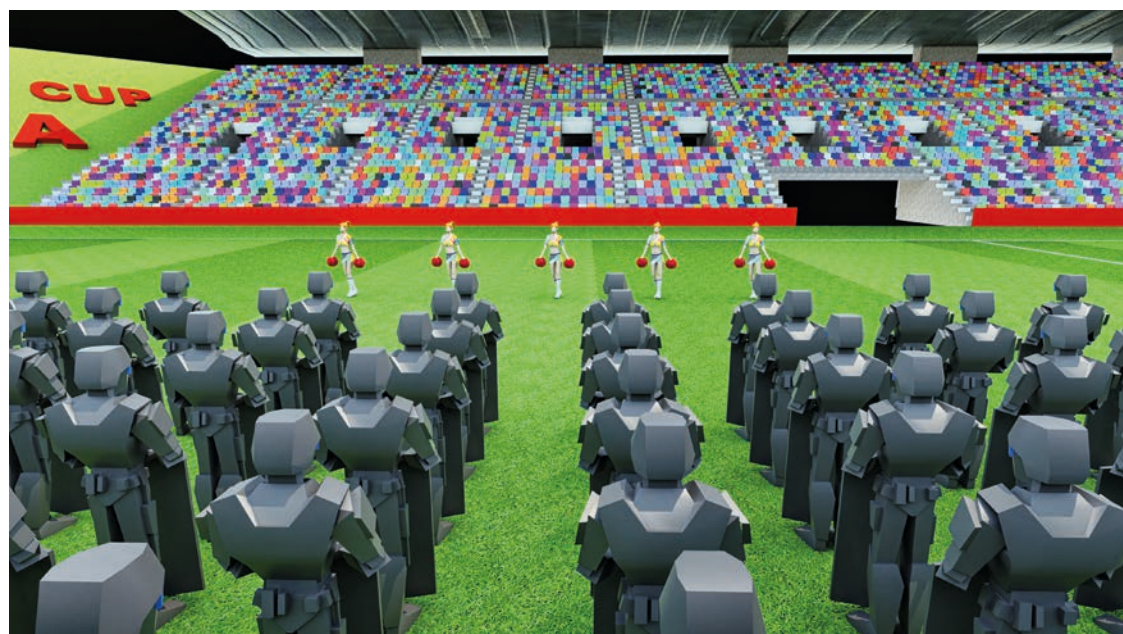
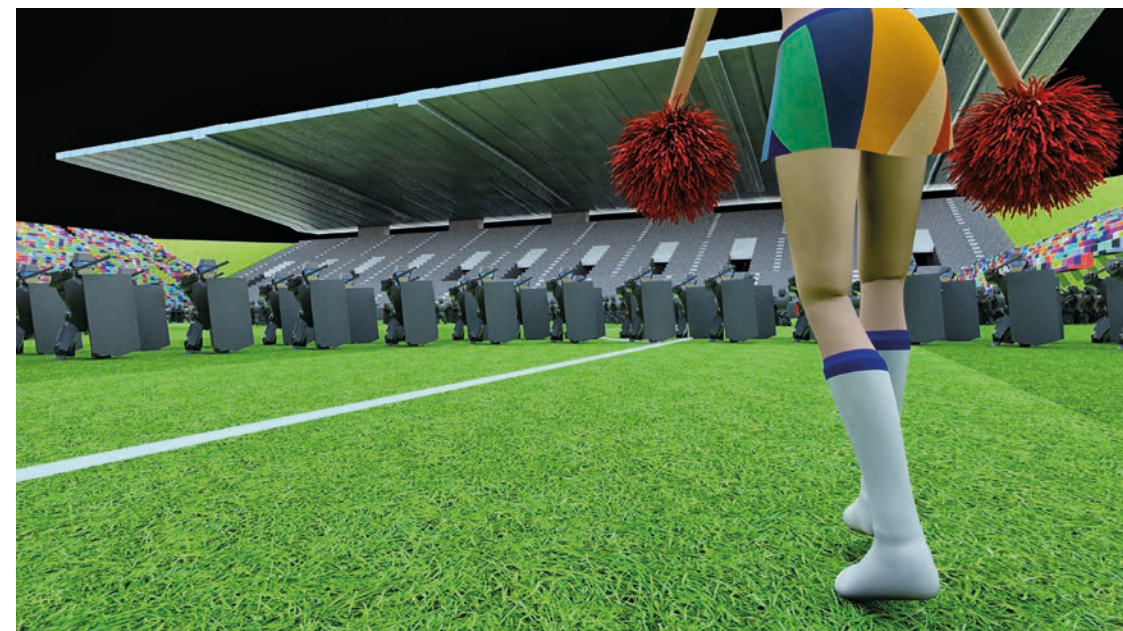
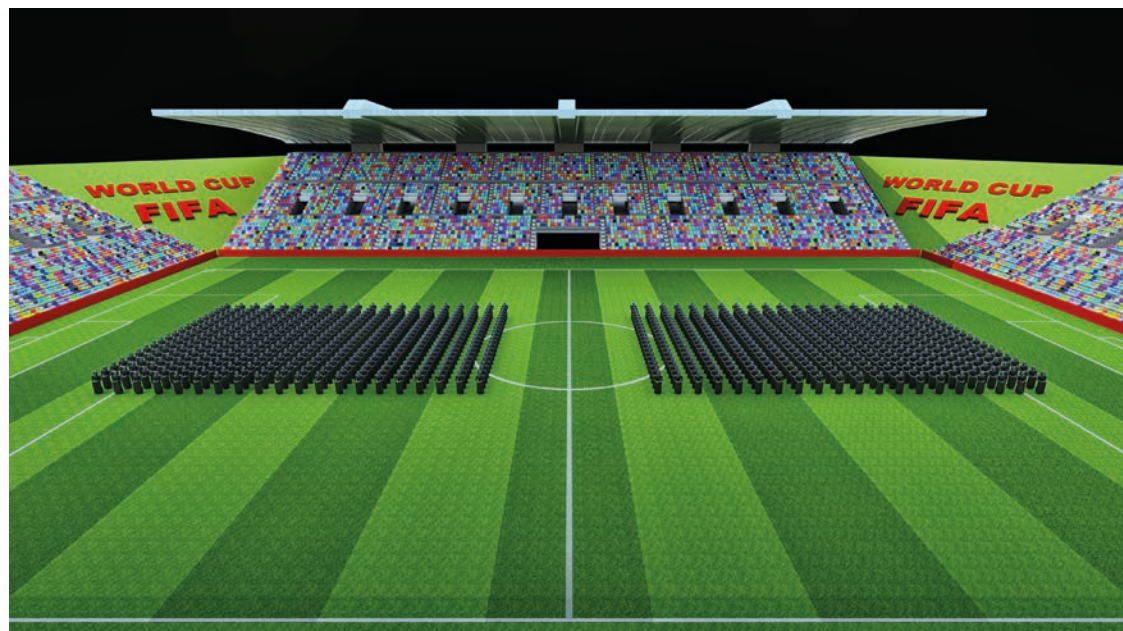
Rehearsal, 2014

TOF Group have made two works especially for the 'Harmonious Society' exhibition, both with football as the subject matter.

Rehearsal is a new commission for 'Harmonious Society' by TOF, created as a distinctively dark and memorable animation. Riot police have invaded the pitch in a football stadium. They fill the pitch, dressed in ominous black riot gear. Slowly they start to move in formation, the sound being like that of a major army operation. Every so often a circle of saccharine cheerleaders punctuates the menacing army. The army manoeuvres gradually evolve into something like a dance formation. However, the stadium is empty; there are no fans. The sinister thumping sound of the riot police march pervades the whole space. The work is reminiscent of a 1980s pop music video, or a scene from a more recent Hollywood blockbuster film with CGI crowd scenes. The anonymous riot police and cheerleaders are all identical clones. The individual viewer, surrounded by thousands of 'people', feels profoundly alone. What is the rehearsal for?

Lindsay Taylor







WANG SISHUN

Nothing Happened Under Heaven, 2014

Perhaps one of the most physically powerful works to examine the concept of 'Harmonious Society' is Wang Sishun's newly commissioned sculpture of the same name, in Chinese. Standing over 2 metres tall, a giant metal cylinder balances at an impossible angle, as if defying the laws of physics – a continuation of the artist's exploration of how spatial distance is changed and challenged by time. What is brought into question is not only how such an immense work can tilt at such a delicate degree, but also how the structure can lean so unwaveringly for the entire duration of the exhibition. More important, however, is the question of whether this perilous balance is a prerequisite condition needed for a truly 'harmonious' existence? The sheer precariousness of the sculpture forces such a question, which the artist happily leaves unanswered.

Wang Sishun has suggested that the cylinder is hollow and weighted inside by lead. The questionable truth of this, however, only adds to the mystery of its magical balancing act. The cylindrical structure itself is smooth, silver and untarnished. Unlike other industrial minimalist works, the piece seems to ignore direct engagement with the physicality of the spectator. The size and weight of the viewer are belittled, overshadowed by the tower's audacity in height and girth. The theatricality of the work *in situ* is thus embodied. *Nothing Happened Under Heaven* is not only a ready-made spectacle; the event of us viewing and being present with the work is part of the spectacle as well.

Ying Tan







WANG YIN

Bouyei Dances II, Tibetan Dances II, Dance, 2013

Wang Yin studied painting while in the Department of Stage Design at Beijing's Central Academy of Drama. This comes as no surprise, since the theatricality in his work is unmistakable. The beautifully dressed figures in his paintings (*Bouyei Dances II, Tibetan Dances II, Dance*, all completed in 2013) seem enraptured in joyous dance. We sense this by looking at them, although each figure is completely faceless. The works do not seem to belong to the still-life tradition of Western oil painting, but neither do they seem to fit into a Chinese tradition of the medium. The subjects of these three paintings do not appear to depict a scene that actually happened; nor do they seem to come from a direct observation of the outside world.

Wang Yin appears to use painting as a way to contemplate, question and critique painting itself as a discipline. Why make this reflection? Is it possible to reduce any sense of anxiety resulting from the uncomfortable disconnect between a Western language and a Chinese context? Wang's investigation into finding a new language of painting is not an anxious inquiry. Instead of being dominated by a strong sense of responsibility, it is filled with playful joy. His paintings focus on the minorities of southwest China, dancing, singing and full of jubilant movement. The representation of the faceless figures suggests that their actions seem more important than defining identity or fixed lineage. The gleeful movement is directly discernible, but what bears questioning is whether this reflects the existence of a 'Harmonious Society'.

Ying Tan







XU QU

Upstream, 2010 – 2011

Upstream is a record of a journey Xu Qu made with a friend on the Liangma River. Starting from the artist's residence, just outside the centre of Beijing, the pair voyaged for over five hours to see where the river led. 'I have no idea where she goes. But I know that we can go upstream,' the artist said. The two friends sailed in a rubber dinghy when the route permitted, and walked while carrying their vessel when the waterway was blocked.

In truth, the video is a recording of a performance. Xu Qu was aware that he and his companion were heading into the city, towards the central government's headquarters, Zhongnanhai, and that their journey could be stopped by the authorities – an eventuality that is seen in the piece. Through the pair's curious action, the work therefore offers an alternative outlook of engaging with the ideological systems present in our contemporary lives, rather than succumbing to the common psychological states of being detached and isolated, which can develop from inner city lives.

Denise Cheung





YAN BING

Secret Drought, 2014

Yan Bing presents *Secret Drought*, a selection of a series created since 2009 which has never been exhibited in the UK prior to 'Harmonious Society'. The work involves transporting soil from the artist's hometown in the Loess Plateau, a remote part of China, to Beijing where he now resides. This organic matter is turned into mud and is then applied to ordinary household furnishings as a way of addressing tension between contemporary urban and rural life. Despite the seemingly serene aesthetic, the items lose some, if not all, of their functionality.

Yan Bing is concerned with the threat posed by urbanisation to traditional values still found in agricultural communities similar to the one he grew up in. The longing to preserve such attitudes is evident in his willingness to travel back and forth to collect earth – as if he is attempting to reverse the process of urbanisation. Yet the artist remains in Beijing. The issue may not be easily resolved, but in addressing it Yan Bing demonstrates his own struggle to achieve a balance between the two ways of life, assessing which he holds in highest importance.

Denise Cheung





YUAN GONG

Losing Control, 2014

Through the process of unpacking the contents of Yuan Gong's *Losing Control*, the state of mind in which the work was conceived and constructed becomes quite apparent. Rusty, noisy and unyielding, each piece of metal scaffolding is harsh, sharp and dirty, confronting all the senses. The way in which the work is installed is further testament to this. Each nut and bolt is screwed on by a specialist machine, screeching unbearably with every unnerving turn. With the arrival and assemblage of this work, one can sense that someone somewhere has been deeply wronged. The accompanying videos show seemingly jubilant flares, but closer inspection reveals that this first impression is mistaken. The sound that accompanies these projections is further evidence of the jarring sound of grinding saws against metal.

In 2013, due to new urbanization projects taking place in Shanghai, Yuan Gong's studio was subject to forced demolition. Scaffolding was erected in order to prevent any activity from taking place within the building. The artist gathered the metallic debris left behind and re-appropriated it to produce *Losing Control*, accompanied by six projectors showing sparks flying off in all directions. Yuan created a new narrative regarding the profound transformations in China by re-staging accumulated familiar objects. In so doing, he addresses questions about memory and identity, as well as depicting cycles of destruction and reconstruction, and stability versus instability – clear themes that have been approached in his previous works.

Ying Tan







ZHANG PEILI

Elegant Semicircles, 2014

One of the foremost pioneers of video art in the 1980s in China, Zhang Peili has played a pivotal role in placing Chinese contemporary art on the world map. As his recent works can attest, his practice has never been neatly contained within the confines of video. The artist's interests in the social dimensions of alternative art forms, as well as his emphasis on disconnecting image and reality, have remained constant over the years.

For 'Harmonious Society', Zhang Peili produced the largest site-specific commission for ArtWork, a 19th-century lighting warehouse over 1,000 square metres in area. Six flags of different colours project into the centre of the room. In unison, they slowly wave 180 degrees as the large swathes of fabric gently sweep the floor. Each flagpole is over 3 metres in length and runs parallel to the ground. The flags hang uniformly on each pole, one after the other, as if part of a pre-choreographed procession. Unlike the banners of synchronised military processions, no flag can be perceptibly understood as identifiable from a particular nation. Instead they are made from fabric in pure, solid colours – green, red, blue, white, and so on. They move uniformly up and down, then left to right, in a gentle half-circle motion, giving rise to the title, *Elegant Semicircles*.

While the flags suggest the embassy-like pomp and ceremony associated with an official national cortège, *Elegant Semicircles* can be read as a humorous interpretation of a large-scale choreographed dance. The ambiguity of the flags' status as political symbol is left open-ended, with Zhang Peili commenting that it is often most interesting when a work leaves certain things unsaid.

Ying Tan







ZHOU XIAOHU

Military Exercises Camping: Sentry Post Cinema, 2009–2014

One of the first contemporary artists in China to work experimentally with sculptural ideas of video and animation, Zhou Xiaohu presents a towering, fully immersive work for 'Harmonious Society'. With a background in sculpture, oil painting and graphic design, the artist presents *Military Exercises Camping: Sentry Post Cinema*, a dynamic combination of these three mediums, inducing confusion and bafflement, making viewers question the evidence of their senses and their assumptions about 'the facts'.

A pioneer of video animation, Zhou Xiaohu creates work that is infused with a keen sense of humour and delight in visual play and punning. In this work, found upon entering the ground floor of the ArtWork, the largest of the six venues in 'Harmonious Society', he weaves the element of creating layers of images between moving pictures and real objects into what he has established as his signature style. Immediately upon entering the installation, one is met with a bombardment of frantic phones ringing and the sound of unfamiliar voices. Along with surrounding videos that reference scenes of war, terrorism and international summit meetings, these add to a disorientating array of sensations. The artist satirises the level of media control in a digital age, in which public opinion can be manipulated through documented news, and where scenes of war, torture and famine have become commonplace and have ceased to shock. Are these events recreated, staged especially for this work? Or are they actually happening in real time, as they are being viewed? The accumulation of doubt begins to turn into a sense of paranoia. Faced with today's economic growth, the pursuit of luxury and fashion, and the collective dream of growth in wealth, people exhaust their wisdom and resources in order to 'get ahead'. What are the consequences of our actions? Although these are impossible to predict, no one wants to cope with the alternative – that perhaps our everyday actions add up to a meaningless end.

Ying Tan









ZHUANG HUI

Mobile Sculpture, 2014

Zhuang Hui has always been motivated by humanist as well as aesthetic issues. While his artistic practice spans a diverse range of materials and approaches, almost all engage with real events and places. Fundamental to his work are first-hand experiences of the political ideals that underpin the 'New China era' and which are slowly disentangling the current social fabric. He frequently produces sculptures that question our empiricism and regard towards inanimate objects. *Mobile Sculpture* is no exception. A sealed wooden crate seems perfectly plain for all to see. However, closer inspection turns any conclusions upside-down. The appearance of the crate's wooden façade is a trick; it is in fact carefully hand-painted to disguise its actual material identity, bronze. A further intriguing aspect is added by providing a story about its contents: a precious piece of jade is said to be hidden inside it. Since the viewer is unable to verify this fact, it only adds to the work's aura of mystique. The title refers to the next stage for the project-like artwork, in that it will be shipped all over the world, collecting stamps, elaborating its story, tracing its itinerant movement. Thus viewers will have to negotiate another layer of authenticity and translate its newly generated narrative for themselves.

For the artist, a link between past events and present is continually negotiated through 'rumours, stories and thoughts', which reappear in his sculptural practice. An element of his distrust in our history is also felt as he makes the audience constantly question not only the contents of the crate but also the materials used to fashion it in the first place. Zhuang Hui maintains that what we do not see exists just as much as what we can tangibly see and touch. Seemingly invisible entities are present just as we are, but in a separate world, perhaps with even more fascinating things to offer.

Ying Tan







ON THE ART OF LIVING IN A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY⁶

LU XINGHUA

In 1976, Andy Warhol opened his 'Sickle and Hammer' exhibition in New York, and almost at the same time China opened up. In his exhibition, Warhol tried to show that during the Cold War, in the Socialist world, a Coca-Cola can in Shanghai was undoubtedly a work of art, whereas, in a Wall Street boardroom, hammers and sickles were unarguably works of art. In this context, Warhol's selection of Mao as a subject becomes highly significant: the Pop Mao is the double agent of the global capitalist apparatus. The face of Mao in Warhol's hands could be accepted by both sides of the Cold War. Mao comes to be the emblem of the global spatial-order war, the permanent revolution, the total conflict confronting us in the future.

As we know, Warhol was the godfather of the so-called 'Cynical Realists', who have been prospering in the new art market in China since 1993, their spearheads including Wang Guangyi, Zhang Xiaogang and Yue Minjun. By 1983, when Warhol visited China, the country was fully ready to open up to the global market. The methodology of Pop Art was used to re-appropriate the iconic socialist heritage and reproduce it to sell to the new rich. The re-territorialisation of the stage of class struggle by brands, commodities and identities was successfully launched by the new so-called 'Political Pop' movement. The Cynical Realists were its protagonists, taking root around 1985 and maturing after 1993, when Chinese artists had the chance to exhibit at the Venice Biennale. These new Pop artists were dazzled by the spectacles of global capitalism, and they blamed the Communist Party for opening up the country too late, while marvelling at what devilish things the global capitalist system could do to their post-revolutionary country.

Wang Guangyi was the leading artist in the gang. He tried to re-appropriate and recycle post-socialist symbols and emblems in his iconoclastic art – not to annihilate them, but to use the ruins of the revolutionary past as raw materials. This approach is considered by some to represent the major crime that contemporary art has perpetrated in China: speculating on the revolutionary past, re-vamping it to sell on at a higher price to new owners, while touting slogans such as 'autonomy' or 'art for art's sake'. What such artists end up doing is selling the socialist heritage to the capitalist market.

For Ai Weiwei, practising contemporary art is a way to secure his personal liberty, freedom of press for all, and the future of democracy in China. The media in the West is only too willing to cooperate. In my view, what the artist is in fact fighting for is the right to sell, and the protection of his position in the price hierarchies of the existing art market. He makes money by retailing

freedom and democracy not only to the Chinese audience but also to the media machine of the West. His post-dissident gesture is problematic. What Wang Guangyi and Ai Weiwei face in common is the so-called China fallacy: the idea that, with economic development, China will inevitably follow the Asian Tigers and step into the boat of democracy. The true story, however, is that the monstrous capitalist development needs a political dictatorship to sustain the threatened social system. These artists cannot make sense of what capitalism can do to the people and the land. They have to face the consequence that the global capitalist system might not bring democracy to China, and that they might in fact be aiming at a blank target.

It is commonly believed that China is a place where the actuality of Communism is a visible reality. But the state capitalists bought it up, complying with voracious international gangs to exploit it as they saw fit. And it is the responsibility of anybody and everybody to collectively use his or her capacity to reclaim the territory of Communist intelligence by rebellion or occupation. Communism – if defined as a search for the promise of freedom of equality in common intelligence – is still a valid cause for the Chinese people, but the pursuit of it should from now on be based on equality of intelligence, which is a far more important cause than that of democracy or old-style Communism.

In a speech made in 2013 at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing, the philosopher and scholar Jacques Rancière contrasted Ai Weiwei and Vladimir Tatlin. I believe he was suggesting that Ai Weiwei's post-dissident artistic strategy makes fun of Tatlin's great cause of utopian internationalism, using art for socialist propaganda. It tells us a lot about the political parameters of Chinese contemporary art: in polar opposition to what the revolutionary avant-garde stood for, the latter was frequently cited as a source of inspiration by Chinese contemporary artists.

By discussing what has happened in the history of Chinese art during the second half of the 20th century, I have led you into a more open scenario about what the world might look like, with China edging into a leading role in global politics. I have helped prepare you to answer the following question: from the point of view of contemporary art, is there an alternative future for the world, other than a harmonious society with the new Chinese syndrome? This is the question asked of us by the Asia Triennial Manchester 2014.

Yes, we will have an alternative, but with one condition: artists need to intervene. But how? In my opinion, art in the future needs to play a parallel role with politics and science. Democracy and a capitalist economy can contribute



to a harmonious society only if art plays a decisive role, along with politics and science, as a supplement or supporting element.

If understood and undertaken in a courageous way, art in the future will mean inventing the means and ends of our political goals, even inventing the means of invention. Artists will be competing with politicians and scientists over new legislation for the world. This will arouse considerable debate due to issues such as climate change, the new earth politics and the total global war over survival.

The exhibiting artists of the Asia Triennial Manchester test us on this question: how seriously should we take it when we face an ideology such as a harmonious society, idolised by both the Chinese communist ideology and Confucius's apostles today? Let's take it deadly seriously.

In the most radical sense, the harmonious society was the political goal of early utopian socialists, such as Charles Fourier. It simply means the opposite of existing civilization. It is a term we like to use to name the state of existence after we have twisted some tendencies in our current way of life. By today's standards, it should be a society based on a new libidinal economy, balanced in needs and desires, producing pleasures for everyone.

Commenting on Fourier's proposal for curing all the diseases of civilization, French structuralist Roland Barthes notes: 'The goal of the harmonious society is neither to protect itself from conflict, nor to reduce it, but to exploit it for the greatest pleasure of each and without lesion to anyone. How? By playing it: by making all the conflictuals into a text.'⁷

After visiting China in 1974, Barthes declared that China in 1974 was a political text. What does that mean? It means that society then was composed of socialist subjects, without officially claimable property, open to whatever social reforms you can imagine. Primary school students were reciting Mao's texts in unison, meaning: be prepared to sacrifice for the Motherland, for the Party. Calligraphy by female workers in the workshops of state-owned factories became the daily ritual.

In a harmonious society, everyone does their bit of art. Chinese subjects stuck in the conflicts of the Cultural Revolution became readymades. Their bodies were works of art (or hostages for ransom), ready to be transformed into new identities. They welcomed new changes. The Cultural Revolution was an art exhibition. Art took over politics. For me, this constitutes a very reassuring gesture.

In 1958, Mao asked the professors in the Department of Philosophy at the People's University to compile a textbook of Communist life. He believed that we could learn to live a Communist life if we had a textbook. That aim was not naïve at all. Today we definitely have to learn to live a certain kind of life. It remains the same lesson for all of us. Communism was not a distant goal. It was, for Mao, an art of living. We need this art of living more desperately than ever.

It also requires us to re-think the Brechtian view of the art of living: each of the arts contributes to making the greatest of all – the art of living – better. One's particular way of practising art should contribute to the enhancement of

the art of living for everyone. In this apocalyptic age, the art of living becomes a real state affair, more important than politics.

To conclude: the story of Chinese art in the 20th century tells us what the nation and the people have gone through, but it also assures us that the people and its artists are thus more experienced in practising the art of living in an uncertain future. The overcoming of the new Chinese syndrome must be the political goal of the near future. A harmonious society with the new Chinese syndrome could be viable if there were to be active participation from new collectives of people and intervention from artists. By intervention, I mean we should not only make art political, we should also make art compete with politics and science in the new terrain of earth politics: the *nomos*, the artisanship of the earth.

⁶ A one day conference for *Harmonious Society* was hosted by the University of Salford at Media City UK on 29th September 2014. The two keynotes of the conference by Lu Xinghua and Wu Dar-kuen are included in this catalogue.

⁷ Roland Barthes, *Complete Works, III*, Seuil, 2002, p. 788.





CFCCA

LIU XIAODONG

PAK SHEUNG CHUEN



LIU XIAODONG

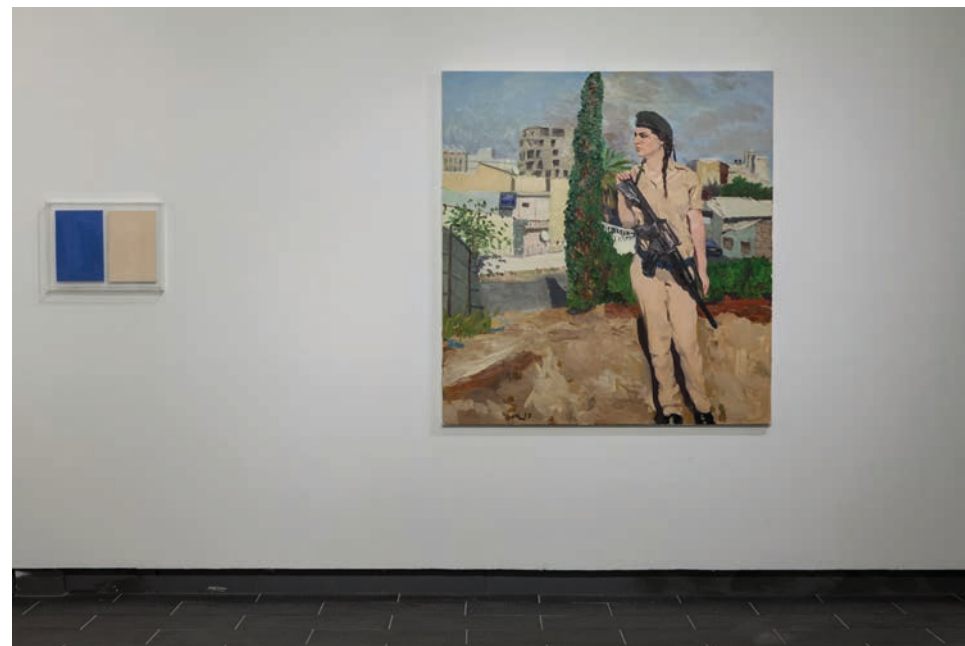
In Between Israel and Palestine, 2013

In Between Israel and Palestine is the culmination of work created by Liu Xiaodong during a month-long residency in Tel Aviv in 2013. 'Harmonious Society' marks the UK premiere of the paintings, which are exhibited at CFCCA together with a fifteen-minute film and a selection of excerpts from the artist's journal, filmed and written while travelling around the Holy Land. These accompaniments serve to demonstrate the extent of his working method, as he also richly incorporates both photography and sketches in his development process.

Liu Xiaodong is internationally renowned for painting social intricacies in his native China. A series of figurative canvases from 2003, collectively known as *The Three Gorges Project*, examines the impact of the eponymous Chinese dam. This tour de force of modern engineering has been the subject of controversy both domestically and internationally, due in part to the resulting environmental upheavals and the relocation of surrounding municipalities.

No stranger to directly engaging with conflict areas, the creator of these sixteen diptychs visually conveys the division that might not otherwise be immediately discernible in his vignettes of everyday life in Israel and Palestine. The size of the pairings is a contrast to the usual large canvases that Liu Xiaodong works with (these are more along the lines of *In Between Israel and Palestine* #19). This is a result of the practicality of being easily transportable, and a sign of the artist's preference for painting *en plein air*. His aim is comprehensively and faithfully to document the themes he observes. These global, contemporary issues go far beyond just religion and politics. Liu Xiaodong's works allow the audience to do away with popular misconceptions of a contested part of the world and view them through the artist's own lens.

Denise Cheung & Ying Tan





PAK SHEUNG CHUEN

Resenting Hong Kong Series: Resenting My Own History, 2014

'Hong Kong people have a general resentment towards their history. Sadly, today will become another day in history that will become another resentment in the future.' This statement was made by Pak Sheung Chuen on 14 December 2006, in response to a local activist movement that was part of the Star Ferry Pier and Queens' Pier Preservation protest against the Hong Kong government's decision to demolish these iconic landmarks of cultural heritage. Pak Sheung Chuen took a \$1HKD coin and brutally scraped the side with the profile of Queen Elizabeth II against the ground, until the profile completely disappeared, leaving a long mark on the ground.

In response to 'Harmonious Society', instead of making a comment on the relationship between Hong Kong and Mainland China, the artist decided to examine the faded colonial relationship between Hong Kong and Britain by recreating his 2006 work with the help of members of the public from both territories. He first collected \$1HKD coins with Queen Elizabeth II's profile from Hong Kong citizens through social media and roadside booths (after 1993 these colonial coins had largely been replaced by new coins showing the Bauhinia flower that represents the city). He then invited British citizens in the UK to scrape their own coins against British ground until the profile of the Queen slowly vanished, leaving a long scar – as a metaphor for the 150 years of colonial history and its imprint on Hong Kong. During the colonial era the coin was the connection between the Hong Kong people and the British Empire. Now the link is broken. A moment of reflection on the past and future is called for, as the shiny surfaces of the scraped coins have been combined to form a mirror in the exhibition. This on-going project lasts for the whole duration of the show.

Ying Kwok







THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY

ANNIE LAI KUEN WAN

SAMSON YOUNG

WANG YUYANG

ZHAO YAO



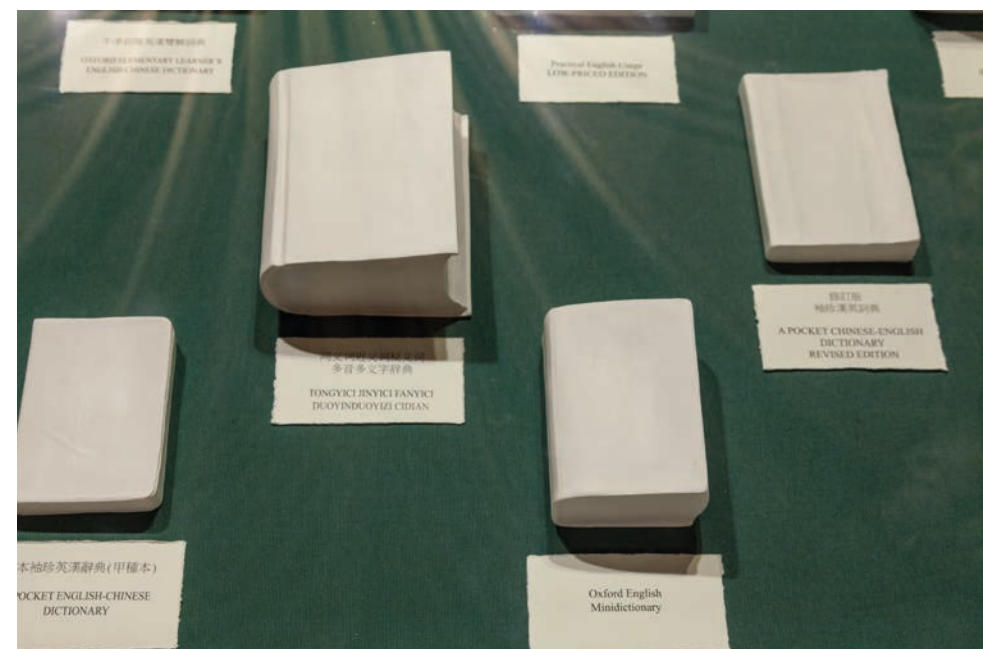
ANNIE LAI KUEN WAN

Lost in Biliterate and Trilingual, 2014

Lost in Biliterate and Trilingual was inspired by the linguistic milieu of Hong Kong, in which Cantonese, English and Mandarin are a part of everyday life as a result of the region's history. Growing up when Hong Kong was a British colony, Annie Lai Kuen Wan recalls being 'educated to speak English more proudly than Cantonese'. In 1974, however, Chinese became the other official language after the Hong Kong people demonstrated and petitioned for its equal status. The title of the work refers to the Hong Kong government's linguistic policy adopted after the Handover in 1997.

For her installation, Annie Lai Kuen Wan created ceramic copies of dictionaries used by herself and those in the private collections of her friends. She employs the medium of ceramics throughout her work to explore memory, perception, and association through imitation and absence. Made from moulds, her reproductions resemble the originals in form but retain none of their content or usability. For the ceramicist, this leaves room for expressing different sentiments with each creation. Annie Lai Kuen Wan has produced porcelain copies of various ordinary objects where everyday accessories are recontextualised in order to analyse their provenance, and our relationships with such items. In this instance, for 'Harmonious Society', the notion of identity quietly permeates.

Denise Cheung







SAMSON YOUNG

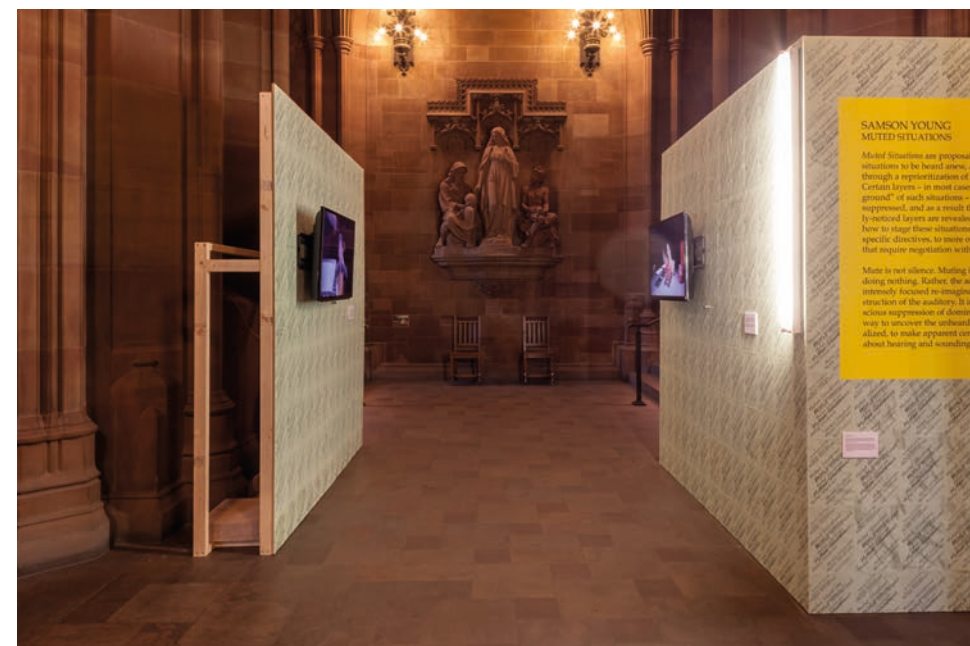
Muted Situations, 2014

Coming from a classical music background, Samson Young has always used sound as an essential element in his art practice. After a site visit six months prior to the exhibition, looking at various venues, he decided that he wanted to exhibit in the John Rylands Library and that he wanted to create a piece that would respond to the venue, which requests no excess noise. However, if we observe closely enough, we realise that a library is never actually silent. There is always the sound of whispering, bodily movement, pages being flipped, and even breathing.

Inspired by this common experience, Samson Young developed a series of conceptual situations in which sounds are muted or consciously suppressed. *Muted Situations* are proposals for sonic situations to be heard anew. The artist created an archive of twenty situations, predominantly activities with sounds. He then invites the listener to imagine that the most prominent layer of sound is muted or suppressed, while all the others remain normal. Consequently, an altered aural experience emerges as the lesser-heard layers are revealed. Instructions on how to stage these situations range from specific directives to more open approaches that require negotiation with the participants.

Some of the situations have been created as 'objects' in the exhibition, while others have been staged live. Examples include Samson Young's creation of a few mahjong tiles in a soft material that makes no sound when played. He also directed three muted performances, which included a string quartet recital and a lion dance, both of which were staged in a film studio and subsequently exhibited as two individual videos. During the opening weekend of the exhibition, the artist also worked with a local choir, St Chad's Consort, and staged a live performance within the library. He requested that the singers perform with no less energy or seriousness than usual, but try to suppress and silence the 'sound-producing' part of the performance. The conflicting act of sound suppression paradoxically created an abnormal harmony in the library environment.

Ying Kwok



THERE'S A PLACE
BETWEEN VIOLENCE
AND SILENCE.
I WILL MEET
YOU THERE.

JAKAR
PRIN 02224
MADE IN TAIWAN

ITEM NO: 7338
VOLUME: 2.5





WANG YUYANG

Breathing Books, 2014

Wang Yuyang's *Breathing Books* is a site-specific installation located in the magnificent Historic Reading Room in the John Rylands Library. In this cathedral-like space, surrounded by small reading alcoves on both sides and flooded by natural daylight through stained-glass windows, Wang Yuyang responded to the exhibition theme by referencing the library's extensive Chinese book collection, then recreating those books as hyper-realistic silicon sculptures, complete with replicas of original tables and chairs. The books look as if they have just been taken down from the shelves and randomly piled up on a desk in the middle of the room. However, upon closer inspection, one comes to realise that each object is inhaling and exhaling, subtly, like a living being. While we take our knowledge from books, Wang Yuyang's books breathe as if they have absorbed life and experience from us; as though they have lived through the ages in this highly decorated neo-Gothic building.

Wang Yuyang has been working on his *Breathing* series since 2005. By giving an ordinary object a 'breath', he makes it live, acting against our expectations. The passive become active, which creates a moment in which we can re-examine our relationships with everyday artefacts. As the sculpture moves in rhythmic motion, the noise from the motor can easily be mistaken for the sound of wheezing.

Machines and modern technology have always been essential parts of Wang Yuyang's works. Many of his sculptures incorporate motors and electronic devices, but the ideas behind them are always rooted in ancient Chinese philosophy: the concepts of yin and yang, and the ways in which apparently opposite and contrary forces are actually complementary.

Ying Kwok







ZHAO YAO

Wonderlands, 2014

Airports are barometers of the economic growth of a country. Between 2005 and 2010, China constructed 33 new airports from scratch. This trend continues, with China expected to spend RMB 1.5 trillion to increase the number of airports to over 230 by 2015, and 300 by 2030. Beijing airport overtook Heathrow as the world's second largest airport (by passenger numbers) in 2010.

In response to this rapid economic and urban development, Zhao Yao has created contoured carpets featuring aerial views of Chinese airports. All the carpets are scaled down in proportion to fit within the corridor space of the John Rylands Library, on the main circulation route leading to the historic part of the library. Each carpet is hand-dyed, and some parts have double layers which emphasise the three-dimensional aspect of the real-life landscapes. The installation features three airports in different cities in China: Urumqi, Haikou and Shenyang, which are all currently undergoing development and expansion. Zhao Yao sees man-made landscapes as magnificent modern embodiments of human productivity, diligence and creativity. For him, they are something to marvel at, like a wonderland that symbolises adventure and dreams. His carpets are made with pure wool, soft and warm, indicating that the artist is trying to create an appealing environment that invites people to walk over, to sit and to stay, leaving their own traces of human activity – just like the travellers who pass through the airports.

Ying Kwok







MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL

LI WEI

YUAN GONG

ZHENG GUOGU



LI WEI

A Decorative Thing, 2014

Li Wei is a fast-rising young artist, who prefers to be referred to as 'he', the form commonly used when gender is unspecified and a general reference to human status is required. Li Wei produced *A Decorative Thing* especially for 'Harmonious Society' after a site visit to Manchester Cathedral. The artist was already associated with religion following two previous exhibitions in 2013, 'Thank God' and 'The Confessional'. The works highlight the reality and illusion of our lives: contradictory, but also at times complementary.

Manchester Cathedral is a Grade I listed masterpiece and an incredible form of living art on its own. Instead of competing with the interior, Li Wei decided to create a piece of art that would co-exist in harmony with its surroundings. Responding to the Gothic architecture of the cathedral and its decorative medieval interior, the artist crafted an intricate sculptural mirror. The decorative frame is adorned with images of both real animals and fantastical hybrid creatures. A mysterious hooded figure at the base, with the majority of his facial features hidden, remains unidentified. The artist has given no answers, but rather leaves us to our own imaginations. While the reflective sculpture brings the viewer and the interior into focus, it also provides a literal reflection on humanity, evolution, and scientific and religious beliefs.

Ying Kwok









YUAN GONG

Turbulence, 2014

In addition to the installation, several performances were staged in Manchester Cathedral during the exhibition's opening weekend. A collective from the Shanghai Institute of Theatre Studies, known as Zag Group, choreographed a gathering that began with interactions using delicate, harmonious movements and culminated in the actions of an aggressive horde, adding more passion to this act of resistance.

Ying Tan









ZHENG GUOGU

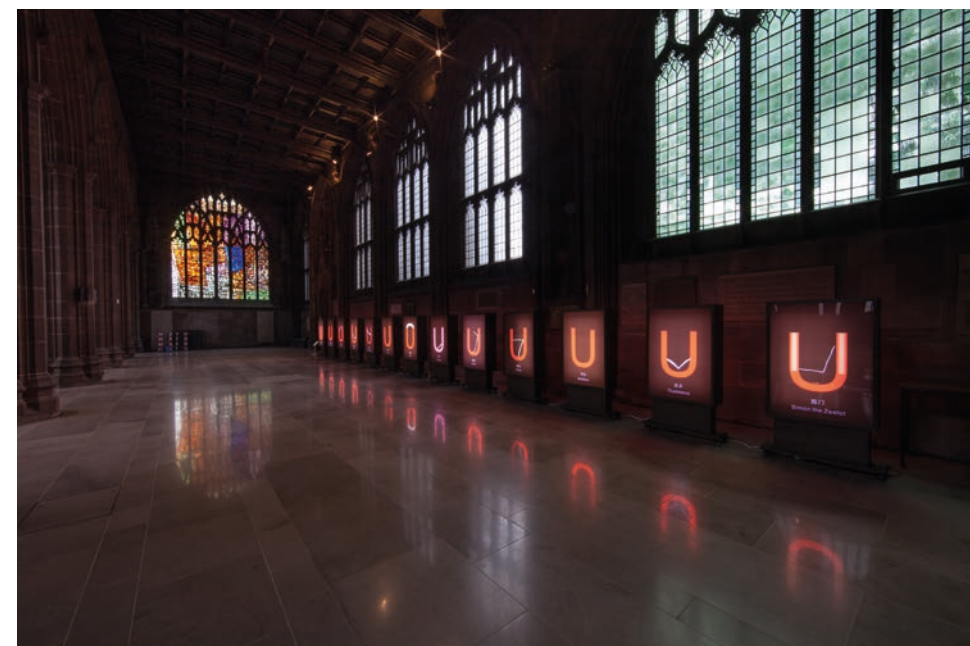
Brain Lines, 2014

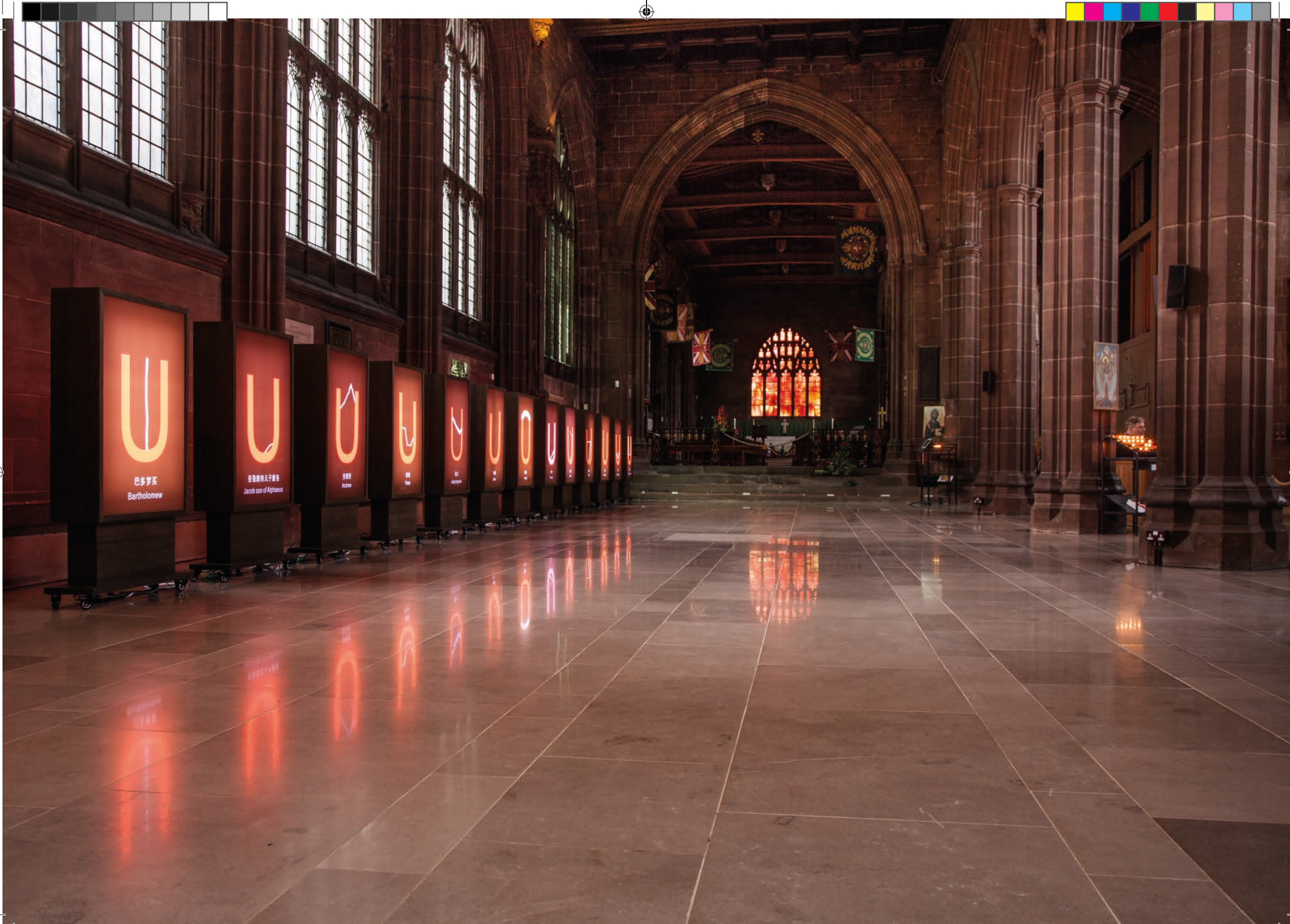
Zheng Guogu is a conceptual artist who has never devoted himself to a particular medium or style, but rather follows his instinct, working across performance, photography, painting, sculpture, embroidery and land art, all of which makes him difficult to pin down.

Attempting to juggle fact, fiction and myth, and playing along the blurred boundaries of fantasy and reality, Zheng Guogu has created a series of light-box installations for exhibition in Manchester Cathedral. These portray the brain connectivity of Jesus and his twelve disciples. The idea is that our brain is split into two hemispheres – the rational left and the creative right – and, in general, these process separately. Zheng Guogu's diagrams of left and right brain hemispheres, derived from a fictional neurotheology study, show Jesus as possessing complete consciousness, while the apostles are shown as perfectly connected, with fully formed U curves and various links in between.

The artist's minimal and modern light-boxes sit surprisingly well with the cathedral's tall stained-glass windows and polished stone floors. They subtly reference the spiritual meaning of light, but also nod towards the use of light boxes for X-ray illumination in medical study. This site-specific work at a subconscious level explores the fine line between faith and science, drawing on the relevance of religion within contemporary life and vice versa.

Ying Kwok







MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

CHANG HUEI-MING

CHEN CHIEH-JEN

KAO JUN-HONN

LEE KIT

LUXURY LOGICO

YAO JUI-CHUNG



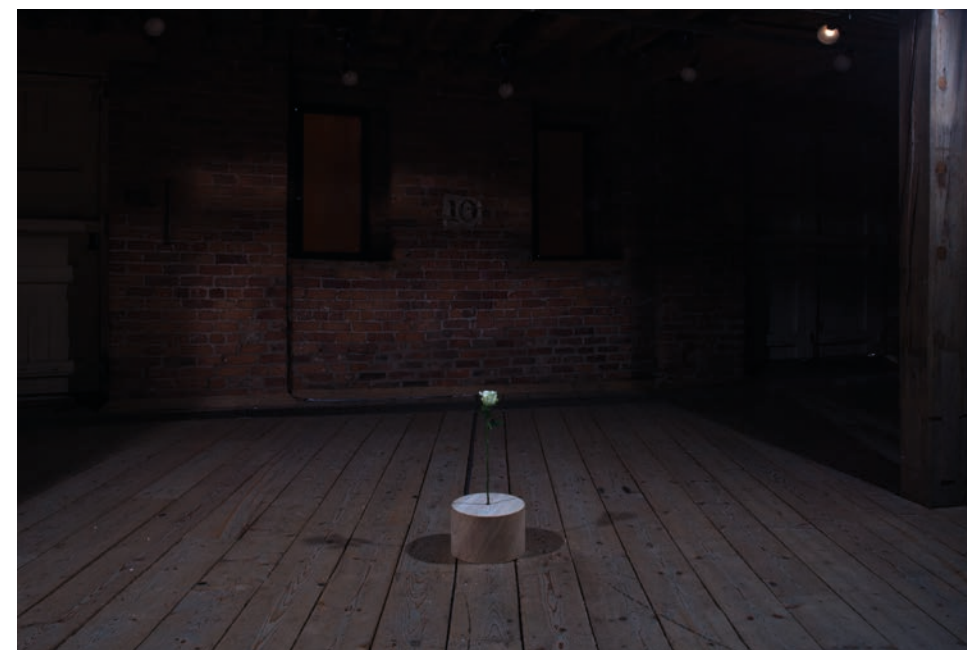
CHANG HUEI-MING

The Last Rose, 2014

The Last Rose presents itself through temporal, spatial and sensuous experiences. A single rose stands on a plinth and is surrounded by 16 lamps programmed to change in intensity, colour and direction. The elements for the installation seem simple, but the work produces complex sensory effects. The brightness and speed of the lighting change over time, which manipulates and accelerates the sense of time. The shifting light also alters the sense of space, because dramatic shadows are cast that transform the museum space. The rose seems to stand still, yet it vibrates intensively – 1,600 to 1,800 times a minute – which speeds up the aging of the rose every day. Thus, an almost invisible violence is hidden within a subtle movement.

Chang Huei-ming often experiments with the relationship between stillness and movement, the visual and the sensuous. He frequently installs high-speed motors on objects that challenge the visual capacity for observation. Take his earlier work *Watching Dust in the Sunlight 14:05* (2008): this installation of a scene from daily life shows a dining table located next to a half-opened window. A gust of wind blows a plastic curtain, which knocks over a cup and spills the water inside. It is a 'still' installation of an ephemeral moment, yet there are subtle, almost invisible elements of motion wherein the ephemerality resides: the curtain blowing in the wind and the vibrating cup spreading water. Chang Huei-ming brings uncanny factors into everyday scenes to encourage visual observation that challenges habitual perception. For the UK premiere of *The Last Rose* in 'Harmonious Society', the flower is in delicate but intense motion that blurs the boundary between action and inaction. While apparently calm and still, the rose is silently dying at accelerated speed.

Yu-ling Chou





CHEN CHIEH-JEN

Realm of Reverberations, 2014

Realm of Reverberations is a four-channel video installation, telling stories about the past, present and future of the Losheng Sanitarium. The sanitarium was the first medical institution for leprosy patients in Taiwan and was built in the 1930s during the Japanese colonisation. Due to the medical misconceptions of the time, the authority adopted the policy of quarantine, which obliged patients to live their entire lives in the sanitarium. In 1994, the Taiwanese government decided to build a metro maintenance site in the area. Since then a large part of the sanitarium has been demolished, and patients have been forced to leave and move to modern hospitals. Groups such as the Losheng Preservation Movement (LPM) began to protest against the metro construction. The artist did not make the film during the heyday of the movement, nor was he directly involved in the protests. He uses a long-take and long-shot perspective to trace back the history of the sanitarium and contemplates the ways in which the pathological history and reality have been excluded. He also asks how such an exclusion influences future generations.

Realm of Reverberations contains four narratives about four women connected to the sanitarium. One young woman spent most of her time in the company of Losheng's residents. She kept returning to the site after the demolition and started to collect discarded documents and unwanted medical photographs. Another subject – a leprosy patient – composes ballads that tell of her life and her sadness. The third subject, a mainland woman, works as a caretaker in the sanitarium. Finally, there is a stage actress who is also an activist for LPM, playing a fictional character on film that is based on her semi-fictional writing, which in turn stems from her theatrical and activist experiences. *Realm of Reverberations* composes complex narratives around the establishment and the demolition of the Losheng Sanitarium. Although preservation efforts seem to have come to an end, since the majority of the facility has been torn down, Chen Chieh-jen's works allow the 'movement' to continue to happen in the way that his films question the absolute end of an event, generating multiple voices that reverberate around the past, the present and the future.

Yu-ling Chou









KAO JUN-HONN

Malan Girl, 2014

Kao Jun-honn is an artist whose research-based works focus mainly on contemporary society in Taiwan, engaging with issues such as space, politics, memories and histories. Using documentary as one of his main forms of artistic practice, Kao Jun-honn conducts in-depth fieldwork for his subjects, placing his findings within complex socio-economic contexts.

Malan Girl is a project developed from a 'research-based-residence' programme undertaken in cooperation with the Taipei Contemporary Art Center and Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art. On taking up the residency at CFCCA Manchester, Kao Jun-honn became inspired by the world's first passenger railway, whose terminus was on the site of the city's Museum of Science and Industry. The artist considered that the development of the railway could be regarded as the beginning of modernisation and globalisation. Returning to Taiwan after his residency, the artist started to look at Taiwan's own railway history and its relationship with modernisation. He then turned his attention to 'Malan Girl', a traditional song of the Amis (one of the indigenous mountain tribes in Taiwan). The song tells the story of an Amis girl who uses a train as a modern tool to commit suicide over an unblessed relationship with a city boy. The railway thus connects the life of the indigenous people with the life of the city, where the Han Chinese – one of the majority ethnic groups in Taiwan – live.

The railway transports goods and people; it also leads to ethnic and class conflicts. For *Malan Girl*, Kao Jun-honn also brought in narratives about the 'Tang Ying-shen incident' which took place in 1986. Tang was a Tsou tribal youth who left his hometown but was exploited as cheap labour in the city. Having only been in Taipei for nine days, he committed a crime and was sentenced to death at the age of 18 for murdering his Han employers. In *Malan Girl*, Kao Jun-honn does not intend to make any accusations; instead, he melancholically narrates the conflicts of modernisation by exploring the sad story behind a folk song and editing in the narration of the farewell letter written by Tang Ying-shen in prison, expressing his feelings of regret and longing for home.

Yu-ling Chou







LEE KIT

'I don't owe you anything', 2014

'I don't owe you anything' is a new work by Lee Kit, and is one of the most direct responses to the exhibition title, albeit in an abstract way. The work is about an unrelieved sense of resentment and grievance. 'Harmonious Society' has been alternatively translated as *tianxia wushi*, literally meaning 'nothing [has happened] under heaven'.

The work relates to a prolonged, almost endlessly compressed social situation in a 'harmonious society'. It raises questions about how insignificant an individual can feel in a society; and, as human beings, how little we think we can achieve under heaven. Thus, even though there might be a lot we could do, it might ultimately be better to do nothing. Lee Kit's painting shows a disembodied hand touching something, but there is no feeling or impact whatsoever.

The artist sees the space as his canvas. He arranges a number of elements in a seemingly unintentional and random way, but everything is in fact precisely positioned. The complete installation consists of the painting and its projection, a number of small paper strips, and rolls of coloured Perspex. The pastel-like colour projection blurs the boundaries of the small paper strips and blends them into the substrate. Once we try to step in and get a closer look at details, our shadow is sharply projected onto the wall. It becomes part of the installation, but at the same time it blocks the light, putting the viewer in a disturbing and uneasy position, prompting an immediate response. The artist skilfully evokes the paradoxical discontentment that can arise out of a seemingly harmonious setting, encouraging the viewer to reflect on their own day-to-day life experiences.

Ying Kwok





LUXURYLOGICO

Solar, Manchester, 2014

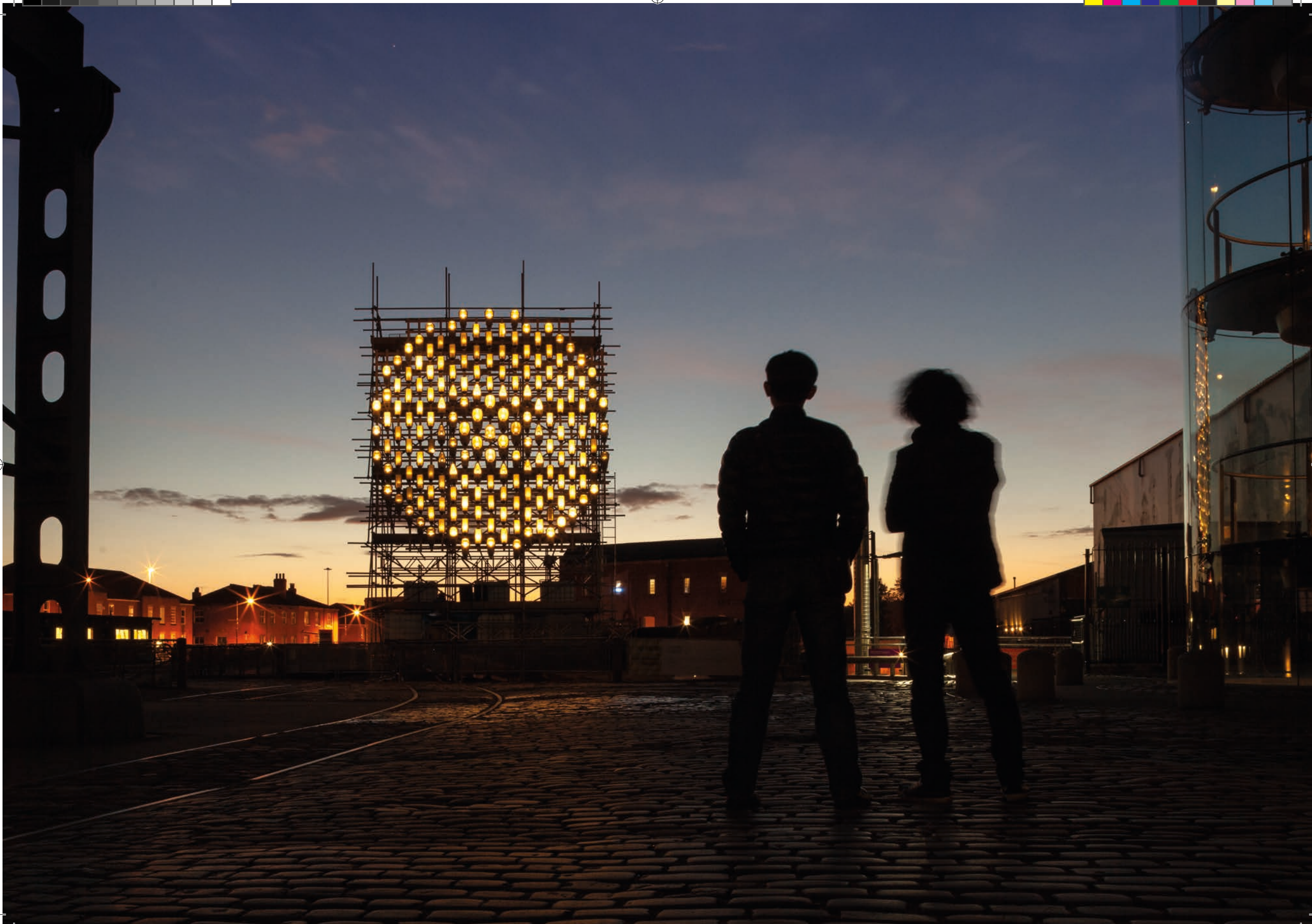
LuxuryLogico is a collective comprised of four artists born in the late 1970s/1980s: Chen Chih-chien, Lin Kun-ying, Chang Keng-hau and Chang Geng-hwa. Their playful new-media art creations are often composed of hybrid and cross-disciplinary elements, demonstrating their diverse skills in computing, music, theatre and lighting. *Solar* is a series of site-specific installations, which have been displayed widely in East Asia, including in Taiwan and Hong Kong. It is also a cooperative project, for which artists collect unused and discarded domestic and street lights from local communities. Through the long process of collection and cooperation, the artists bring out collective and local memory in re-assembling the materiality of light.

Solar, Manchester is premiering in Europe at the Museum of Science and Industry, a historical site showcasing the industrial heritage of the city. LuxuryLogico's mesmerising installation consists of an artificial sun made from 177 recycled lanterns. Various artists worked in Manchester for over a month, in cooperation with Salford City Council and Bury Council, collecting discarded street lamps that have long been part of the city's site memory. Each old-style filament light bulb was converted into an LED light, transforming these unwanted objects into futuristic forms of light source. Hence, through the recycling-like process, the artists take discarded objects into an optimistic future. *Solar, Manchester* highlights global issues such as recycling and energy consumption, but it also speaks to local memory in adapting street lamps that once illuminated the city at night. Interestingly, *Solar* is an artificial sun that shines after sunset. During the night it changes its brightness and pattern, accompanied by background noises that sound like signals from outer space. The installation therefore has light-hearted characteristics, integrating modern technology with nature, and combining local memory with global subject matter.

Yu-ling Chou









YAO JUI-CHUNG

Long Live and *Long, Long Live*, 2014

Yao Jui-chung's works have consistently and critically engaged with Taiwan's recent history. Having grown up during the martial law era and witnessed the lifting of the totalitarian regime, the artist is extremely aware of the changing of cultural symbols in the cityscape followed by the shift in political regime. In particular, he has strong interests in historical ruins that in the past functioned as crucial political sites. As he says, 'Everything will fall into ruins.' Forgotten remains encapsulate the growth and decline of ideology and civilisations.

Long Live and *Long, Long Live* are two video works that continue on from Yao Jui-chung's earlier *Phantom of History* series, in which he played a dictator or warlord who paraded around Cihu Sculpture Park, where vast quantities of discarded Chiang Kai-shek statues are displayed. Playing a phantasmal leader and acting out old-fashioned gestures of greeting in an amusement park, the artist dealt with a complex and autocratic history through slapstick humour.

Long Live and *Long, Long Live* continue this use of an idiosyncratic and performative language. Shooting in various historical sites, Yao Jui-chung uses montage to connect scenes about a martial law past and Cold War memory. For instance, *Long Live* opens with a shot of anti-landing 'rail stick bars' on the beach in Kinmen (one of the closest islands to China). These steel bars were built after the bombing of 23 August 1958 during the second Taiwan Strait Crisis. The next scene shows wartime fortifications and air raid sirens sounding loudly. A repeated voice shouts out 'long live' from a speaker that transmits sounds from the underground. The next shot shows a dictator standing in the disused Chieh-shou (literally meaning 'long live Chiang Kai-shek') Hall, which housed the Nationalist Party office during the 1950s. The camera then slowly pulls back and reveals that the previous scene has just been a projection screen in a derelict cinema. Yao Jui-chung uses a complex cinematic language, illustrating his artistic reflection on the illusive nature of history and the way in which the phantoms of the authoritarian past keep returning to haunt our collective memory.

Yu-ling Chou







THE ARTISTIC ACTIVISM OF ASIAN ARTISTS: THE ASIA ANARCHY ALLIANCE

WU DAR-KUEN

The Asia Anarchy Alliance (AAA) was formed in Japan on 6 February 2014 as an extended curatorial project of "Republic without People" (RWP), which was originally organized as an exhibition in 2011, the year of the centennial of the Republic of China (Taiwan). Playing on the title, which has strong political connotations, this curatorial initiative was intended to reflect on the relationship between political ideology and contemporary art in Taiwan. Developing the project during the commemorative year of a 'nation' being built highlighted the possibility of satirical reflections on the concept, reality and illusion of a nation state through the medium of artistic creation. In 2014, the scale of the project was expanded and two artist groups were invited to join the AAA: Xijing Men and the New Government of Japan. The new alliance began with a conference meeting at Tokyo Bay, which focused on the practice of artistic activism, with the aim of spreading throughout the whole of Asia.

The alliance is not based on a union of nations; instead it proposes an 'artistic Asia'. The first article of its declaration states that the AAA is an anti-governmental artistic alliance, with anti-nuclear power, free will and humanitarian concerns as its core values, and working within a border-free Asia a key aim. The alliance proposes to transcend historical and national boundaries, and advocates an Asian version of social reform with exhibitions, artistic actions and social movements.

Globalisation has already influenced society and living conditions in a comprehensive way that transcends regions, nations and other aspects of human life. It also forces countries to liberalise regulations, refrain from numerous functions originally performed by national governments, and concede economic areas (e.g. land, policies and banks) to 'market' and 'effective private capitals'. Multinationals have infiltrated our lives silently. Since the 1980s, multinational capitalism has been advocating neoliberalism in trade and colluding closely with governmental policies on macro-economic regulation and control, i.e. the general governmental management of national economies. National governments can effectively control the market economy through policies, regulations, programmatic instructions and administrative management. All of these accelerate the capitalisation of our daily needs, including basic national policies on education, social welfare, human rights and many other aspects that underpin our lives. To promote their interests,

multinationals influence national governments' policies and become the ruling class at the top of the pyramid. Such a collusive structure grows and reproduces as inbreeding in Asia, creating a giant beast that hungrily devours all national resources. Its insatiable greed jeopardises our future and that of the next generation. When we wake up in the morning, we will find that the world has been turned into an illusion of expansion by a minority of people's desire: the pseudo-civilisation that alienates labour, the continuous inflation of the monetary market, the excess of capital accumulation, the negative real wage growth that leads to insufficient consumption, the deterioration of genuine social welfare, and the ecological damage sustained by environments. All of these are problems concerning Asian cultural issues and anxiety over confrontations between the generations.

The world is collapsing with an unprecedented speed beyond our imagination. While access to information has become a universal commodity with the beginning of the information age, the transmission of information highlights the necessity for redefining the concepts of national borders/territories, because there is an unanticipated acceleration in the collapse of the traditional world. As a result, concepts such as 'national borders', 'nation states', and 'nations', which have been in conventional usage over the past centuries, appear now to be inappropriate and obsolete. Nowadays, public opinion has become the basis for winning elections in a democratic society. In recent years, we have witnessed numerous protests against globalisation and governmental policies erroneously designed to achieve progress beneath the waves of urban renewal in Asian cities. Citizens in different countries keep striving for public support by forming alliances and connections. The development of Internet and mobile devices facilitates the formation of today's transnational alliances among non-democratic or other undefinable regimes in Asia.

Western discursive power today dominates the art world, and the absence of Asian artists on the global art scene is taken for granted. The achievements of Asian artists in contemporary art are often regarded as garnishes at the feast of Western art or as exotic species from the perspective of Western art history, dispensable at any time. Meanwhile, almost all the political-regime types in the world can be found in Asia, which makes it a troubled region and a hotspot for international conflicts. For Asian countries,





it is critical to internalise and localise the Western mode of development in order to prevent themselves from becoming the mouthpieces for capitalists. A state's artistic power entails its political power. Discursive power is undoubtedly embodied in a state's political-economic system, cultural values and achievements in art.

The emerging markets in Asia today undermine the long-term stability of Western economy. Meanwhile, Asian regional integration and free trade cooperation will be crucial for the future prosperity of the continent. Launching a coordinated attack on the system by converging columns from inside and outside of the system, or employing a strategy similar to the AAA refuting opponents with their own arguments, is also a feasible way for left-wing artists, NGOs and alternative communities to weaken the system. In addition, the formation of transnational alliances and connections will become the guiding principle for deconstructing Asia's transnational capital problem and restoring the continent's artistic and political discursive power. It seems that nativists can employ these strategies as well.

Political theories have divergent visions of what peace is, and so do the public. People's words and deeds reveal their common aspiration for life, namely 'a better future'. However, despite having the same aspiration, there are huge differences among people due to the lack of a common definition of happiness. Some regard the current peaceful situation as the greatest happiness, while others cannot turn a blind eye to upcoming radical changes; still others cannot put up with a situation in which people having the same aspiration slander and even hurt one another. Amid the noisy clamour, how can we maintain clarity of mind? How can we protect, convey and support the happiness we have defined for ourselves? Every citizen in contemporary society has to reflect on these questions.

With artistic activism as the approach, member artists seek to transcend national borders and institutional rules, find a remedy for the sense of impotence and frustration caused by current realities, and establish a virtual Asian artistic alliance (i.e. AAA) on liberalist foundations. Restoring the beliefs abandoned by states, the AAA can intervene in current affairs as an artistic activist. It makes a transnational genealogy possible and puts the lofty ideals of artists into practice by activating aesthetic imagination with artistic event. The AAA signifies a bold attempt to transform philosophers' and artists' fantasies into real social practices. By taking action, it responds to people's desire for participating in public affairs and investigates all the aesthetic visions behind this desire.

On the one hand, the AAA opposes a unified ultimate 'peace'; on the other hand, it does not attempt to replace a collapsed system by transforming itself into another system. The AAA expects itself to pursue its ideals bravely and to face every moment of hesitation and decision with honesty.

In the post-globalisation era, Asia is caught in the predicament of public resistance. This is the toughest of times, but it is also the era of artists. They maintain necessary silence but can unveil mystery through artistic

performance. The tension and delight created by Asian artists' works can only be cultivated in Asian culture. How can Asia face the world? Keeping vigilant about this question, Asian artists should spare no efforts in preserving the memory of discourse and contemplating the way to break stereotypes of thinking. The alliance among Asian artists and the system established by the AAA may serve as a proper reference for Asian contemporary art. The AAA intends to change and influence the whole of Asia through artistic involvement in public affairs. The process would seem to be a long one. After all, it is a presentation of ideals as romantic as the space-time structure inherent in land and body.

Regardless of their nationalities, the greatest common denominators of the artists invited by the AAA are their reflections on Asia's current situation. The artists focus on diverse issues such as national borders, identities, housing, environment, nuclear disaster, economics and trade, democratisation, and so forth. These are the issues that an artistic Asia has to address constantly. In other words, the AAA defines Asia as the of an art project without borders.

In terms of history, politics, democratisation and the core value of being a 'human', we are dealing with common problems ranging from the individual level to that of contemporary Asia. In contrast to the Western world, 'artistic Asia' in the artists' imagination is a subject that can take on a unique cultural appearance. With its own system established through dialogue and through clarification of the pluralistic cultural contexts in Asia, Asian artists can transcend colonialism and the aesthetics of sadness, as well as create the possibility of engaging in an equal dialogue with the Western world.

First, Asian artists should abandon their sectionalism in order to gain a new perspective, amid an integration of hybrid and heterogeneous cultures. They should orientate themselves to the postcolonial concept of cultural compound, which emphasises integration and innovative generation. The current predicament may be an opportunity for Asia. However, the emergence of such an opportunity still relies on all cultural practitioners to assimilate social tensions calmly and incrementally, as well as to encourage alternative views about contemporary Asian culture, society, art and politics.

Recent events indicate that Asia will soon undergo an irreversible, radical change. The complexity of the disaster caused by the earthquake in Japan in 2011 prompted people to reflect on the diverse problems caused by an overemphasis on capital-oriented economic development. The state apparatus has already institutionalised the lessons taught by capitalist society, with its regulation and control techniques. The collusion of representative systems with capitalism triggers a mechanism driven by language that automatically isolates and controls people. It also leads to the separation between legal action and language, and thereby results in the failure of the representative system. If we attempt to resist 'the core of the beast', namely the institutions appropriated from the Western world, how should Asia deal with its previous acceptance and interpretation of these institutions and find a foothold under



such circumstances? Is it possible for Asian artists to become an exception to the contemporary socio-economic system? In view of existing understandings, these artists encounter common issues concerning contemporary Asian affairs that require immediate resolution, and have applied their professional specialities to create installations, videos and performances to act as their artistic voices. Through these actions, the belief of 'artistic Asia' also serves as the power for these artists to change asymmetrical and adverse circumstances, as well as to leverage the beasts of governments and capital with art.

The AAA can be regarded as a 'transnational political and artistic movement' launched spontaneously by a group of Asian artists. It is a collective artistic practice embodied from 'imagination'. Through the development and mobilisation of exhibitions, promotional materials, networks and all kinds of artistic activism, potential entry points may be identified amid the interstices of contemporary Asian thoughts and realities. This is not only a process of encircling globalisation with nativism; it is also an introspective revolution from the inside-out of the art circle. Finally, let the power of art lead us to the forgotten, oppressed and ignored life, and let artistic activism take centre stage.





NATIONAL FOOTBALL MUSEUM

CHEN WENBO

KAN XUAN

LIU JIANHUA

TOF GROUP (INSTALLATION)

YANG ZHENZHONG



CHEN WENBO

Tactics, 2014

Chen Wenbo is a painter known for his large, often hyper-real canvases of everyday objects. He is also a serious football fan and has made an ambitious new work specifically for the 'Harmonious Society' exhibition within the context of the National Football Museum.

The installation, *Tactics*, consists of four double-sided panels, folded like a traditional Chinese screen, and presented in the middle of the gallery space. The screen reflects the dimensions of a real football pitch, along with formal white line markings. The two sides of the screen are slightly different, one being in darker, colder colours to represent an evening match, and one being brighter and warmer to represent daytime. On each canvas is a series of expressive lines indicative of movement. In contrast to the controlled, perfectly flat surface of the 'pitch', the lines are more gestural, painted rapidly, with thicker paint. The effect is of a strategic diagram, communicating how the artist imagines a dynamic game of attack and defence might look.

Of course a screen is usually used to hide or conceal something, but in this instance the viewer can walk around it and see both sides. The artist understands that football is now a multifaceted and globalised industry, with its own subcultures and, inevitably, corruptions. He encourages the viewer to see all sides: 'I keep watching football matches, but I ask myself if a pure game exists.'

Lindsay Taylor





KAN XUAN

Man With Balls, 2014

Kan Xuan is one of the most important female artists in China. Her work is often subtle and focused on the unseen or hidden elements of daily life. Her video installation *Man With Balls*, shown here for the first time, comments on some of the less obvious aspects of sport.

Each of the three screens illustrates different aspects of a golf driving range at night in Beijing. One shows the viewpoint from the machine that sucks up the balls at the end of the range: the effect is otherworldly, almost like watching an underwater mutant gobbling up its prey. The middle image is the most beautiful – a city still at night, with the occasional golf ball arcing past, like a shooting star in the sky. Finally there is a businessman. The image is grainy, a little like a CCTV shot. The man moves strangely. Is he dancing? Practising moves from a martial art? Is he drunk, or is he venting his frustrations with life?

Around the world today it is common for business deals to be struck on the golf course, or in a private box at a football match. Business at times seems like a game itself. *Man with Balls* is full of the tension this situation might bring, most importantly with regard to how individuals may wish to conform to society's expectations, to play the game, and importantly not lose face with colleagues.

Lindsay Taylor





LIU JIANHUA

Boxing Time, 2002

Liu Jianhua is famed internationally for his unique and innovative use of porcelain – one of the most traditional and ancient art forms in China. For ‘Harmonious Society’ he proposed an existing work, *Boxing Time*, which has never before been displayed in the UK. Fourteen oversized boxing gloves hang, paired at seemingly random heights, in a space suggestive of a boxing ring. Each glove has the name of a country inscribed on the cuff in the native language of that country. The gloves are exquisitely beautiful objects, made from porcelain as it is ‘hard but fragile’. The artist has a dark sense of humour: the gloves would easily shatter if hit.

Liu Jianhua reflects on the contradictions in politics and society, and how easily peace can be broken rather than brokered. Although hung in pairs, the gloves move almost imperceptibly with the draughts in the gallery space: countries that were once friends can quite suddenly become adversaries. With fourteen countries represented, the artist understands that, unlike in the boxing ring, there are not just two opponents. Global politics is complex, with many different viewpoints, evolving relationships and shifting hierarchies. As is all too evident in 2014, those viewpoints can, and do, change.

Lindsay Taylor







TOF GROUP

The Ideal Field for the Perfect Battle, 2014

TOF Group have made two works especially for the 'Harmonious Society' exhibition, both with football as the subject matter.

The concept for *The Ideal Field for the Perfect Battle* was to create a utopian football pitch, within the walls of the National Football Museum, by planting all the types of grass seed available in the UK. The resulting scaled-down version of a pitch is surrounded by tall white walls with a circular hole in each, representing a traditional Chinese garden. Banners on the outside corners of the structure boldly announce the title of the work.

By placing the installation inside the museum, the artists elevate the football pitch to an artefact to be treasured: as with other museum objects, the viewer can look but not touch. As the seeds start to sprout, inevitably some grasses thrive and grow quickly. However, throughout the exhibition other grasses turn brown, slowly languish and die. Despite careful watering, feeding and special UV lighting, the sterile conditions within the museum are not sufficient for all the seeds to thrive. The artists' utopian vision of the ideal field for the perfect battle doesn't, indeed can't, exist.

Lindsay Taylor







YANG ZHENZHONG

Long Live the Great Unity, 2013

Yang Zhenzhong is a multimedia artist, recognised internationally for his films and his often playful installations. Shown for the first time in the UK, *Long Live the Great Unity* introduces the 'Harmonious Society' exhibition to the National Football Museum.

The installation consists of nine large, separate sculptures, which individually make no sense, until viewed through a special viewing platform, where suddenly they align into a stylised Tiananmen. Situated at the north end of Tiananmen Square, the Gate of Heavenly Peace is one of the most iconic buildings in China, culturally significant in its own right but also the backdrop to a number of major events in Chinese history. In China today there are imitations of Tiananmen across the country as theatrical sets and tourist attractions. By breaking Tiananmen up into parts which individually are meaningless, until seen through the one viewpoint where they are unified, the artist is using the work playfully to deconstruct the theme of the exhibition.

Lindsay Taylor







ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

CHANG Huei-ming

Born in Taiwan in 1984, Chang Huei-Ming lives and works in Taipei. His recent solo exhibitions include *CHANG Huei-Ming Solo Exhibition*, Crane Gallery (Taiwan); *Violent and Poetic* (2013), a.m space (Hong Kong); and *CHANG Huei-Ming Solo Exhibition* (2012), IT Park (Taipei). His work has also been internationally displayed at Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (2014), and National Goyang Art Studio in Korea (2013). He received First Prize in Digital Audio-Visual at the 5th Taipei Digital Art Prize (2010) and the Silver Medal Award in New Media Art at the Roc National Art Exhibition (2012).

CHEN Chieh-jen

Born in Taiwan in 1960, Chen Chieh-Jen lives and works in Taipei. His solo exhibitions include *Chen Chieh-jen* (2013), MUDAM Luxembourg; *The Route & Empire's Borders II* (2013), Gävle Konstcentrum; *Happiness Building I* (2012), Hanart Square (Hong Kong); *Military Court and Prison – Chen Chieh-jen* (2008), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (Madrid); and *Condensation: Five Video Works by Chen Chieh-jen* (2007), Asia Society and Museum (New York). His work has been internationally presented at Home (2014), Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation (Sydney); the 8th Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale (2014); *We Have Never Participated*, OCAT (Shenzhen); *Border Crossing* (2012), Kunsthallen Brandts (Denmark); and the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009). He received the 13th National Award for Arts (Taiwan, 2009) and the PULSE Prize at PULSE Contemporary Art Fair (USA, 2008).

CHEN Ching-yuan

Born in Tainan, Taiwan, in 1984, Chen Ching-yuan now lives and works in Taipei. He has participated in a number of exhibitions since 2004. His recent solo shows include *Gestos – Até os olhos da ilha* (2014), LOGO Gallery (Brazil); *(flare-s) Chen Ching-Yuan * TKG+ Projects* (2013), TKG+ Projects (Taiwan); and *Staggering Matter – Chen Ching Yuan Solo Exhibition* (2011), Tina Keng Gallery (Taiwan). His work has also been presented at *Jie: Contemporary Art from Taiwan* (2014), Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art (New York); Art Fair Tokyo – *Chen Ching-yuan's Solo Exhibition* (2014), Tokyo International Forum; and *How can I tell you who I am?* (2012), Adora Calvo Gallery (Salamanca, Spain).

CHEN Wenbo

Born in Sichuan, China, in 1969, Chen Wenbo now lives and works in Beijing. His solo exhibitions include *ABIO-VIEW: Chen Wenbo Solo Exhibition* (2009), Shanghai Gallery of Art; *Chen Wenbo: Broken Series* (2009), Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art (Beijing); *Epidemiology* (2008), Galerie Michael Schultz (Berlin); and *Asian Ray* (2008), PKM Gallery (Korea). His work has been internationally presented at *Latitude/Attitude: 20th Anniversary Exhibition* (2012),

Schoeni Art Gallery (Hong Kong); *Metropolis Now! A Selection of Chinese Contemporary Art* (2009), Meridian International Centre (Washington, DC); the 2nd Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2007); the 6th Shanghai Biennale (2006); and the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma (2003).

HE An

Born in 1970 in Wuhan, China, He An now lives and works in Beijing. His recent solo exhibitions include *He An* (2011), Templon Gallery (Paris); *I Am Curious Yellow I Am Curious Blue* (2011), Tang Contemporary Art (Beijing); and *What Makes Me Understand What I Know?* (2009), Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing). His work has also been presented at the 2nd CAFAM Biennale – *The Invisible Hand: Curating as Gesture* (2014), CAFA Art Museum (Beijing); *2013 Carnegie International*, Carnegie Museum of Art (Pittsburgh, US); *Neon, Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow And Blue?* (2012), La Maison Rouge (Paris); and *Remote Ten Years of White Rabbit – Contemporary Chinese Art Collection* (2011), White Rabbit Museum (Sydney).

JIN Feng

Jin Feng was born in 1962 in Jiangsu, China, and currently lives and works in Beijing. Solo exhibitions include *Jin Feng Solo Exhibition in Dian Shi Zhai* (2012), Tianren Heyi Art Centre (Hangzhou), and *Art-Related Problem – Case of Jin Feng* (2008), Shanghai Zendai Art Museum. His work has also been presented at many international exhibitions, including *The Armory Show* (2014), New York (USA); *Non Cooperation II* (2013), Groningen Museum (Netherlands); *Unknown Sound* (2013), Venice Parallel Exhibition (Italy); 4th Guangzhou Triennial Exhibition (2012) – *Disenchantment of Chinese Imagination*, Guangdong Art Museum; and 1st Montpelier China Biennale Contemporary Art (2005).

KAN Xuan

Born in 1972 in Xuancheng, China, Kan Xuan now lives and works in Beijing. Her solo exhibitions include *Millet Mounds* (2012), Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing); *Kanxuan! Ai!* (2008), Galleria Continua (San Gimignano); and *Protected by Colors* (2006), BizArt (Shanghai). She received the De Prix de Rome Prize in 2005. Her work has been internationally presented at *The Encyclopedic Palace* (2013), 55th Venice Biennale; *The Unseen* (2012), 4th Guangzhou Triennial, Guangdong Museum of Art; *Be Natural, Be Yourself* (2011), FRAC – Fonds régional d'art contemporain du Centre (France); *Face to Time* (2011), Real Jardín Botánico (Madrid); and 8th Gwangju Biennale – *10,000 Lives* (2010), Gwangju Biennale Hall, Gwangju, Korea..

KAO Jun-honn

Born in 1973 in Taipei, Kao Jun-honn lives and works in Taipei. His solo exhibitions include *Counter-Culture2* (2010), Bamboo

Culture Studio; *The Road Project – Taipei Aesthetics of Existence File* (2009); *Passport – The Platform of Friends* (2008), Taishin Tower, Taipei; *The Home Project* (2006), Taipei Fine Arts Museum; and *In Liumaoan, Waiting for Deutschland* (2005), Taipei MOMA Gallery, all in Taiwan. His work has also been presented at the Marnay Art Centre (2012), France; Shanghai Biennale (2013); Forum Biennale of Taiwanese Contemporary Art (2010), Taiwan; and *taiwainpics. doc Art contemporain taiwanais* (2009), Paris.

LEE Kit

Born in 1978 in Hong Kong, Lee Kit lives and works in Hong Kong. His solo exhibitions have been presented internationally, including *Henry* (2011) at Western Front, Vancouver; *Hands* (2010) at MiArt 2009, Milan; *'Well, that's just a chill'* (2010) at ShugoArts, Tokyo; *I'm missing someone but I don't know who is that someone* (2009), Seoul; *Remains from several days* (2008), Mori Gallery (Sydney); and *(Ready-made) Everyday* (2008), Enjoy Public Art Gallery (New Zealand). He received Cheung's Fine Arts Award (painting), The Art of CUHK 2003. His work has also been presented at Tate Modern, London (2010) and the 3rd Guangzhou Triennial (2008).

LEUNG Chi Wo

Born in 1968 in Hong Kong, Leung Chi Wo lives and works in Hong Kong. His recent solo exhibitions include *So I don't really know sometimes if it's because of culture* (2014), Run Run Shaw Creative Media Centre (Hong Kong); *Jonathan & Muragishi* (2013), ISCP (New York); *Untitled* (2012), Hong Kong Arts Centre; *Leung Chi Wo, Rokeby* (London); and *Depot of Disappearance* (2009), AiR base, MuseumsQuartier (Vienna). His work has also been presented internationally at, among others, the 3rd Shanghai Biennale (2000); the 49th Venice Biennale (2001); the 4th Gwangju Biennale (2002); the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Guangzhou Triennials (2005, 2008, 2012); the 5th Busan Biennale (2006); and the 4th Marrakech Biennale (2012).

LI Wei

Born in 1981 in Beijing, China, Li Wei lives and works in Beijing. She has been active since her graduation from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2007 through a number of exhibitions, including *The Unseen* (2012), 4th Guangzhou Triennial; *Get Away* (2012), Lille Art Centre (France); and *Do You Believe?* (2011), Hong Kong. Her solo shows have included *Peace* (2014), Primo Marella Gallery (Milan); *Confessional* (2013), A2Z Art Gallery (Paris); *Hero* (2011) at Today Art Museum (Beijing); and *The Hollow Men* (2009), Hanmo Art Gallery (Beijing). She was also one of the winners of the Focus On Talents Award in 2011.

LIU Jianhua

Born in 1962 in Jiang Xi, China, Liu Jianhua lives and works in Shanghai. His recent solo exhibitions include *Discard* (2014), The Keng Gallery (Taipei); *Liu Jianhua* (2012), Pace Beijing;

Silent Anomalies (2012), Art & Public Gallery (Geneva); *Screaming Walls* (2010), Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Shanghai); *Dream in Conflict* (2008), Galleria Continua (San Gimignano); *Daily-Fragile – Tomb* (2007), King's Lynn Art Centre (UK); and *Liu Jianhua* (2007), Arario Seoul. Liu Jianhua has also participated in many international group exhibitions, including *Picturing Global China* (2014), Oregon University White Box Gallery (USA); *REAL LIFE STORIES* (2012), Bergen Museum of Art (Norway); and the 17th Sydney Biennale (2010).

LIU Xiaodong

Born in 1963 in Jincheng, Liu Xiaodong lives and works in Beijing. He is now one of the most important painters in China. His exhibitions include *Liu Xiaodong's Two Projects* (2014), Shao Zhong Foundation Art Museum (Guangzhou); *Liu Xiaodong: Between Israel and Palestine* (2013), Mary Boone Gallery (New York); *Hometown Boy* (2013), Seattle Art Museum (USA); *Liu Xiaodong: Half Street* (2013), Lisson Gallery (London); *The Process of Painting* (2012), Kunsthau Graz (Austria); and *Liu Xiaodong and Yan Pei Ming, Dual Exhibition* (2012), Massimo de Carlo Gallery (Milan). His work has also been presented in many international exhibitions, including the 47th Venice Biennale (1997), 3rd Shanghai Biennale (2000) and 1st Guangzhou Triennial (2002).

Luxury Logico

Based on the concept of 'hybrid', Luxury Logico was created by four artists born in Taiwan in the late 1970s/1980s: Chen Chih-chien, Lin Kun-ying, Chang Keng-hau and Chang Geng-hwa. They have become known for their lighthearted style, which centres on the idea of 'DELIGHTFUL WEIRD-LAND'. Their solo exhibitions include *Fruition – Fulfill Arts* (2012), Project Fulfill Art Space (Taipei, Taiwan), and *Project Woodpecker – Treignac Projet* (2010), Treignac Projet (Treignac, France). Their work has been presented at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts (2013); *FASCINATION // IMAGINATION* (2013), K11 Art Mall (Hong Kong); The White Rabbit Gallery (Sydney, 2012); and *Vision of Nature: Lost & Found in Asian Contemporary Art* (2011), Hong Kong Arts Centre.

PAK Sheung Chuen

Born in 1977 in Fujian, China, Pak Sheung Chuen now works in painting and conceptual art in Hong Kong. His solo shows include *Killing 3000* (2012), He Xiangning Art Museum (Shenzhen, China); *Hong Kong Diary 2010*, Hong Kong Museum of Art; *Making (Perfect) World* (2009), Hong Kong Pavilion, 53rd Venice Biennale; and *Page 22* (2008), 58th Street Branch, New York Public Library. He has participated in numerous international exhibitions, biennials and triennials, and represented Hong Kong at the 53rd Venice Biennale. In 2012, his exhibition received Best Stand prize at Frieze London; he also won the Best Artist Award in the Chinese



Contemporary Art Awards (CCAA) and Hong Kong Arts Development Awards (HKADA).

TOF Group

TOF Group was founded by three Shanghai-based artists, Jin Feng, Yin Yi and Ding Li. TOF's solo exhibitions include *7-PAMPHLET* (2012) and *Escape Plan* (2011), both in Shanghai. TOF have also participated in many group exhibitions, including *REVEL* (2013), MOCA (Shanghai); *Undressing The Present* (2013), Animation and Drama Theater, Down Stream Garage (Shanghai); *See What Was Never Seen Before* (2012), Guangzhou Triennial; *Just what is it about the end of the world that makes it so Appealing?* (2012), Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing); and *Distance Produces Beauty* (2012), Shanghartgallery (Beijing).

Annie Lai Kuen WAN

Born in Hong Kong in 1961, Annie Wan currently works at Hong Kong Baptist University. Her recent solo shows include *Text · Book* (2013), 1a Space; *Moulding World – A Summer in Denmark* (2005), Habitus; and *Rediscovery* (2001), First Institute of Art and Design Gallery, all in Hong Kong. Her work has also been presented at the Museum of Contemporary Ceramic Art (2013), Shigaraki, Japan; Saatchi Gallery (2012), London; and Museum of International Ceramic Art, (2004), Denmark. She was an award winner at the Contemporary Hong Kong Art Biennial Exhibition in 2003.

WANG Sishun

Wang Sishun was born in 1979 in Wuhan, and currently lives and works in Beijing. His most recent solo exhibitions include *The Indeterminate Boundless* (2013), Goethe Open Space (Shanghai); *Superfluous Things No. 3* (2013), Hive Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing); *Back* (2013), Galerie Krinzinger, Galerie im Parterre (Vienna); and *Liminal Space* (2012), Long March Space (Beijing). Recent group exhibitions include *The 8 of Paths* (2014), Uferhallen (Berlin); *The Invisible Hand: Curating as Gesture*, 2nd CAFAM Biennale (2014), CAFA Art Museum (Beijing); and *ON/OFF: China's Young Artists in Concept & Practice* (2013), Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing).

WANG Yin

Born in 1964 in Jinan, China, Wang Yin now lives and works in Beijing. His solo shows include *Wang Yin* (2014), Tang Contemporary (Beijing); *Start-Wangyin Independent Project* (2013), Platform China (Beijing); *Wang Yin: The Soviet and the Filling Station* (2011), Gao Magee Gallery (Madrid, Spain); and *Wang Yin 2009* (2009), Iberian Centre for Contemporary Art (Beijing). His work has also been presented at the 1st Guangzhou Triennial (2002) and the 6th Shanghai Biennial (2006). Recent group exhibitions include *SE-CONTEXT: 1984* (2014), 37.8 ARTLAB (Beijing), and *Hans van Dijk: 5000 Names* (2014), Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing).

WANG Yuyang

Born in 1979 in Harbin, Wang Yuyang now lives and works in Beijing. His most recent exhibitions include *Liner* (2013), Tang Contemporary Art (Beijing); *Objects of Fantasy* (2013), King's College (London); *51 m2 16#: Wang Yuyang* (2010), Taikang Space (Beijing); and *A Painting* (2009), Art Museum

of the Central Academy of Fine Arts (Beijing). International group shows have includes *Reactivation*, 9th Shanghai Biennial (2012); *The Unseen*, 4th Guangzhou Triennial (2012); and *ON/OFF: China's Young Artists in Concept & Practice* (2013), Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing).

XU Qu

Born in 1978 in Jiangsu, Xu Qu now lives and works in Beijing. Recent exhibitions include *A Hit* (2014), Tang Contemporary Art (Beijing), and *Mutable Forms and Immutable Consciousness* (2013), Tang Contemporary Art (Bangkok); *Xi Sha, South China Sea Projekt 1#* (2011), Hemuse Gallery (Beijing); and *51m2 11# Xu Qu* (2010), Taikang Space (Beijing). Xu Qu has also participated in many group exhibitions, including *ON/OFF: It's Not a Matter of Time* (2013), Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing); *The Unseen* (2012), Guangzhou Triennial (guest); and *Jahresgaben 08/09* (2009), Kunstverein Braunschweig.

YAN Bing

Born in 1980 in Tianshui, Yan Bing now lives and works in Beijing. His recent solo exhibitions include *Superfluous Things, No. 5* (2013), Hive Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing); *My Labour II* (2013), Yang Gallery (Beijing); *Farming Poetry: Yan Bing Solo Exhibition* (2012), Whitebox Gallery (Beijing); and *Curated by Liu Xiaodong: Yan Bing / Temperature* (2009), Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing). Group exhibitions include *Outside the Line* (2014), RH Contemporary Art Centre (New York); *On the Road* (2014), Guanshanyue Art Museum (Shenzhen); *Artbasel Hong Kong* (2014); and the 1st CAFFAM Future Exhibition (2012), Beijing.

YANG Zhenzhong

Born in 1968 in Hangzhou, Yang Zhenzhong now lives and works in Shanghai. His work has been internationally presented in numerous exhibitions, including the 4th Shanghai Biennale (2002); 50th and 52nd Venice Biennales (2003, 2007); 5th Asia Pacific Triennial (2006); and 2nd and 4th Guangzhou Triennials (2005, 2012). His solo shows include *Trespassing, Eternal Return* (2014), Moscow Manege Museum and Exhibition Association; *Overpass: Yang Zhenzhong* (2008), Nikolaj Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center (Denmark); Canvas International Art, Amsterdam, Moscow; and *Yang Zhenzhong* (2006), Ikon Gallery (Birmingham).

YAO Jui-chung

Yao Jui-Chung was born in 1969 in Taipei, Taiwan. He represented Taiwan at the Venice Biennale in 1997 and has taken part in many international exhibitions, including the 2nd Yokohama Triennale (2005); 6th Asia Pacific Triennial (2009); 7th Taipei Biennial (2010); and 9th Shanghai Biennial (2012). He was the winner of the Multitude Art Prize in 2013. He has published extensively, including *The Ruined Islands* (2007) and *Mirage: Disused Public Property in Taiwan* (2011). His works have been collected by the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan; National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung; and Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia.

Samson YOUNG

Born in 1979 in Hong Kong, Samson Young lives and works in Hong Kong. He received a PhD in composition at Princeton University under the supervision of computer music pioneer Paul Lansky. Originally trained in music composition, Samson Young now produces creative work that manifests in a variety of media and across disciplinary divides. His work has been internationally presented at the IV Moscow Biennale of Young Art (2014) and Shanghai West Bund Biennale of Architecture and Contemporary Art (2013). CNN's global portal identified him as one of the 'Top 20 People to Watch in Hong Kong'.

YUAN Gong

Born in Shanghai in 1961, Yuan Gong obtained a PhD in art theory in 2012. His solo exhibitions include *I+I Contemporary Art Exhibition 1st Season* (2014), Shanghai Summit Cross – We Gallery; *Mechanism* (2013), Guangdong Museum of Art (Guangzhou); and *It is Also Good Without a Title* (2013), Embassy of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (Beijing). He has participated in many international exhibitions, including *Pervasion*, China Pavilion, 54th Venice Biennale (2011); The Copenhagen Art Festival (2012), Kunstrad Museum; and the 16th edition of the *Armory Show Focus: China Pier 94* (2014), New York.

ZHANG Peili

Zhang Peili was born in Hangzhou in 1957. He has been a leading figure on the Chinese contemporary art scene since the mid-1980s, and is generally considered to be the forerunner of video art in China. His work has been presented at many exhibitions, including the 45th Venice Biennale (1993); 4th Lyon Biennale (1997); 11th Sydney Biennial (1998); and 1st Guangzhou Triennial (2002). Recent solo shows include *Because...Therefore/Zhang Peili* (2013), Boers-Li Gallery (Beijing); *Certain Pleasures* (2011), Minsheng Art Museum (Shanghai); and *A Gust of Wind* (2008), Boers-Li Gallery (Beijing).

ZHAO Yao

Born in 1981 in Luzhou, Zhao Yao now lives and works in Beijing. His solo shows include *Spirit Above All* (2013), Pace Gallery (London); *Zhao Yao: You Can't See Me, You Can't See Me* (2012), Beijing Commune; and *Zhao Yao: I Am Your Night* (2011), Beijing Commune. Zhao Yao has also participated in many international exhibitions, including *Focus Beijing: De Heus-Zomer Collection* (2014), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (Rotterdam); *Move on Asia – Video Art in Asia 2002 to 2012* (2013), ZKM | Museum of Contemporary Art (Karlsruhe); and *No Soul for Sale* (2010), Tate Modern (London).

ZHENG Guogu

Born in 1970 in Yangjiang, Zheng Guogu now lives and works in Yangjiang. His solo exhibitions include *IMAGES OF MAGNETIC RESONANCE* (2014), Tang Contemporary Art Center (Beijing); *Zheng Guogu X Yangjiang Group: THE LAST BET!* (2013), Hong Kong; *After Dinner Shu Fa at Cricket Pavilion* (Cooperation with Yangjiang Group) (2012), Birmingham; *Zheng Guogu* (2011), The Pavilion/

Vitamin Creative Space (Beijing); and *Zheng Guogu* (2007), Barbara Gross Galerie, Munich, Germany. His work has been internationally presented at the 5th Auckland Triennial (2013); 4th Guangzhou Triennial (2012); and 2nd Guangzhou Triennial (2005). He was the winner of the 2006 CCAA Chinese Contemporary Art Award.

ZHOU Xiaohu

Born in 1960 in Changzhou, Zhou Xiaohu now lives and works in Shanghai. His recent solo shows include *Position* (2012), Art-Ba-Ba Mobile Space (Shanghai); *Zhou Xiaohu's Solo Show* (2011); ART BASEL 42 (Switzerland); *Word Chains* (2010), Long March Space (Beijing, Chicago); and *Military Exercises Camp, Zhou Xiaohu's Solo Show* (2009), Biz Art Central (Shanghai). His work has also been internationally presented at the National Art Museum of China (2010); Tate Modern, London; and 4th Guangzhou Triennial (2012). In 2003, he was awarded the Experimental Video Gold Award at the 36th WorldFest Houston International Film Festival.

ZHUANG Hui

Born in 1963 in Yumen, Zhuang Hui now lives and works in Beijing. His recent solo shows include *Zhuang Hui Solo Exhibition* (2014), Platform China Contemporary Art Institute (Beijing); *Yumen 2006-2009: Photography Project Zhuang Hui and Dan'er* (2009), Three Shadows Photography Art Center (Beijing); and *Zhuang Hui: Ten Years* (2003), Courtyard Gallery (Beijing). His work has also been presented in group exhibitions, including *The Couple Show* (2011), Shanghai Gallery of Art (Shanghai), and *Guan Xi: Contemporary Chinese Art* (2011), Guangdong Museum of Art (Guangzhou). He also participated in *The Unseen* (2012), the Theme Exhibition of the 4th Guangzhou Triennial, and at the Shanghai Biennale (2012).



CONTRIBUTORS

Denise CHEUNG

Denise Cheung is currently the Exhibitions Intern at Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art. Whilst undertaking her Art History BA degree at the University of Nottingham, she also spent time studying at the University of Hong Kong. This academic background as well as being British-born Chinese, has consequently led to a focus on Western art and Chinese art from the Modern period through to the contemporary. In addition to research and interpretation, her career interests include archiving and practical curation.

Yu-ling CHOU

Yu-ling Chou is currently a PhD candidate at the London Consortium and the assistant curator in residence at the Centre For Chinese Contemporary Art. In 2009 she was assistant curator of Chen Chieh-jen's exhibition *Empire's Borders – Western Enterprises Inc.* and she co-curated Plug in x Add on: Taiwanese Contemporary Art with +8 at the Rag Factory (London, 2010). Writing extensively on contemporary art in Taiwan and China, she was awarded the Third Yishu Award for Critical Writing on Contemporary Chinese Art in 2013.

Sarah FISHER

Sarah Fisher is interim director of the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art, working nationally and internationally to better understand the Chinese century through Chinese contemporary art and visual culture. Sarah began her career as an artist, has an MA from the Royal College of Art and taught fine art at the Slade and Chelsea. She has since worked at a more strategic level as Head of Visual Arts (Arts Council North West) and in consultancy. She is also chair of FACT (Liverpool) and Axis (Leeds).

JIANG Jiehong

Jiang Jiehong is Professor of Chinese Art and Director of the Centre for Chinese Visual Arts at Birmingham City University. His recent curatorial projects include *A Decade Long Exposure* (2010), *Guanxi* (2011), and the Guangzhou Triennial: *The Unseen* (2012). He is author of *The Revolution Continues: New Art from China* (2008); *Red: China's Cultural Revolution* (2010); and *An Era without Memories: Chinese Contemporary Photography on Urban Transformation* (2015).

Ying KWOK

Ying Kwok is an artist and curator. With the Chevening Postgraduate Scholarship by British Council, she obtained her Masters degree from Chelsea College of Arts and Design, University of the Arts London in 2004. She worked as the curator of the Chinese Arts Centre (now Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art) in Manchester between 2006 and 2012. To encourage critical thinking and initiate effective discussions around the values of art in Hong Kong, Kwok founded 'Collector Club' in 2013.

LU Xinghua

Lu Xinghua is Professor of Philosophy at the Centre for Social Thought and Contemporary Art, China Academy of Art. His research interests in recent years tend to connect political philosophy with contemporary art. He runs regular seminars on social thought and political philosophy and their implications for contemporary art in China. His publications include *Exigencies for Philosophy* (2009) and *What Does Contemporary Art Do?* (2012).

Ying TAN

Ying Tan is currently the curator for the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art. Her work aims to examine the generation of creative output by forming chains of dialogue among a wide range of artistic practices, including video, performance and sound. Residing in the UK since 2005, upon finishing her MA at the University of Cambridge, Ying has curated numerous projects at CFCCA and offsite projects in London and internationally.

Lindsay TAYLOR

As Art Curator at the University of Salford, Lindsay Taylor is responsible for the strategic development of the University Art Collection. In 2013 she initiated the relationship between the University and CFCCA, and together with Sarah Fisher founded the new collection of Chinese Contemporary Art. Lindsay has expertise in the development of public collections of contemporary art, particularly in areas currently under represented such as installation and digital art. She is a trustee of IOU, Halifax and co-Chair of Contemporary Visual Arts Manchester.

WU Dar-kuen

Wu Dar-kuen is an artist and curator. He obtained his Masters in Fine Arts from Taipei University of the Arts in 2002. He has participated in numerous international exhibitions and curatorial projects, including *Republic without People* (KaoHsiung Museum of Fine Arts, 2011), which won the Jury's Special Award at the 10th Annual Taishin Arts Awards, and *Asia Anarchy Alliance* (2013), which received a Curatorial Project Grant from the National Culture and Arts Foundation.

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